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AUTHOR	Watson, Cicely
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ABSTRACT

The basis for this report is a large research project undertaken by The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) for the Ontario Ministry of Education from July 1974 through December 1975. It also uses evidence from two earlier small studies of OISE, from the academic years 1972-73 and 1973-74. The project was designed to be the main research evidence of the Ministry Task Force on Dropouts. The data analyzed in the report are from the sample of 26 school systems drawn from the 9 regions of the province that contain a total of 79 systems. The within year dropout rate for the sample as a whole was 20,027 or 8 percent. Information obtained from the systems about these dropouts included region, age, sex, month of dropout, achievement level, and program. In addition, questionnaires were sent to all the dropouts and returns were received from 8,141 or 41 percent. Finally, telephone interviews were conducted with 423 dropouts in the sample. The task force mandate was to look into the number of dropouts, who they were, where they came from, why they dropped out, what happened to them, and what were their future plans. The aim was to cover all Ontario secondary school students who failed to complete their courses of study as expected. (Author/MLF)

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FOCUS ON DROPOUTS

Cicely Watson

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An abridged version of the report of the "Ontario Secondary School Dropout Study, 1974-75" by Cicely Watson and Sharon McElroy — a research project funded under contract by the Ministry of Education, Ontario.

EA 011 389

Contents

Introduction *1*

1. How Many Dropouts? *6*
2. Who is Leaving? *30*
3. Why did they leave? *59*
4. What Happened to Them? *111*
5. Who influenced the decision to leave school? *183*
6. Future Plans *216*
7. Re-entries *242*
8. Conclusion *248*

Tables 1 to 50 *284*

Bibliography *332*

Questionnaire Sample *336*

Introduction

The basis for this report is a large research project undertaken by The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education for the Ontario Ministry of Education from 1st July 1974 to 31st December 1975. It also uses evidence from two earlier small studies of OISE, from the academic years 1972-73 and 1973-74.

The project was designed to be the main research evidence of the Ministry Task Force on Dropouts. It included a survey of a large sample, and telephone interviews of smaller samples, of dropouts from the academic year 1974-75, as well as some of the dropouts of earlier years. It also included two sub-studies.

The task force mandate was to look into the number of dropouts, who they were, where they came from, why they dropped out, what happened to them, and what were their future plans. And the aim was to cover all Ontario secondary school students who failed to complete their courses of study as expected. The first problem was to define 'all'. This was not as simple as it appeared. Various terms have been used in research studies of secondary school 'losses', and their findings depend largely upon the definition of the problem. The task force did not intend to investigate transfers (either from one school to another within a system, from one school system to another within Ontario, from a public secondary school to a private one, or from a school in Ontario to one outside the province). But the records of local school systems do not always make clear the distinction between such transfers and true dropouts. In fact, until a request for the student's record is received from the new school, principals and teachers sometimes do not know whether he has transferred or dropped out.

In some studies the dropout figures represent gross losses. It might be better to call them movement or turnover rates because, not only have they not been corrected for the transfers, they do not generally take into account re-entries. Not all those who leave school within the academic year* stay out of school permanently.

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* We do not include as dropouts those who are on a semester system, and hence legitimately leave at the end of a term because they have concluded their courses.

Some return and complete their programs. If we are concerned with losses between academic years we must take into account the re- entries which occur in September. The task force had been asked to comment on the change in the dropout condition for three years, in so far as this could reasonably be done. So, to provide something of a time series of data, it was decided to set up the 1974-75 project in a parallel manner to pilot studies of 1972-73 and 1973-74, and try to provide evidence for other aspects of the task force's questions by means of related sub-studies.

The question of re-entries within the year was taken into account in the following way. We defined a dropout as a student who registered for a program in September* 1974, and left before the end of the school year without completing the program of study. The survey, in all systems but one, began by the school secretary preparing a list of dropouts of the previous month and sending these students a questionnaire by mail. The list and the returned questionnaires were sent to OISE. If the student subsequently returned to school (or the school was notifed of a transfer) the name was deleted from the list, and the student's response was deleted from the total.

For the dropouts from the schools of the other system the administration differed. A condition of that board's cooperation was that the burden on its school personnel be minimal. So the OISE staff were supplied each month with a computer list, by school, of all movements of students — new registrants, transfers, re-entries, and withdrawals.** The names of the withdrawals and re-entries were noted and the former were sent questionnaires. Where re- entry later occurred the name was deleted from the dropout list. The re-entry lists provided an excellent sample to investigate (a) whether their characteristics differed from the main body of dropouts, and (b) re-entrants who had dropped out in previous years.

In September a large volume of re-entries is recorded, particularly in city schools. Therefore the re-entries noted on the September computer sheets represented some of the droputs of previous years, particularly of the immediately preceding academic year. So a sub-study was carried out whereby the dropout questionnaire was sent to all that system's re-entries of 1974-75, together with some additional questions about the length of time they had been out of school and how many times they had dropped out thus far, how their parents felt about the dropout decision(s) and whether they now planned to complete their programs of study.

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* Or within whatever program registration deadline date the particular school system enforces. The variations in date caused some difficulty which is discussed in the section dealing with the flow of losses by month.

** Because we worked from this list, obtaining from the records of the school (by sending a research assistant to each school) only the addresses and telephone numbers of the dropouts and re-entries, we do not have as much identification data for the dropouts of this system as for those of the rest of the sample. We have their dropouts only by sex and year (or grade). We do not have the student's age, program, or achievement level.

Another sub-study involved estimating the no-shows. Apparent losses within a school year actually represent various kinds of movement; re-entries in September might represent losses not only from the previous academic year, but also losses from earlier years; and re-entries during a year have the effect of cancelling withdrawals which have taken place earlier. Another loss group must be considered which complicates the picture — the no-shows who represent some of the losses *between* academic years. The increasing loss rates in the upper grades in recent years are the product of dropouts within the year and dropouts between years. The second group we define as no-shows. We decided not to include them in the questionnaire survey proper because following up no-shows can be very costly. We decided to estimate this group by means of a sub-study. Forms were sent to each school in October 1975 asking them to report the number of no-shows in their school that year. The form was a blank table in which their numbers could be entered by age, sex, and the grade from which the student left. There was a mail strike at the time which seriously interfered with the return of the forms and only 16 of the 26 boards provided statistics. Some were able to report their September no-shows by age of student, sex and grade. Others merely reported total figures. Fortunately, the largest boards of the participating sample were among those making complete returns.

In the interviews students who had reported their intention to return to secondary school in September, and had failed to do so, were identified so that their characteristics, reasons for leaving, plans, etc., might be compared with the mainstream of dropouts. Since the interviews involved three cohorts of losses it was possible to check how stable were the characteristics of those no-shows who had been dropouts from the previous year, had reported that they would be returning to school, and then did not 'show' in September.

It is recognized that the interviewed no-shows were ones who were within-year dropouts, and the estimated and reported no-shows (for whom we do not have questionnaire or interview responses) are between-year dropouts who may never have been within-year dropouts according to our survey definition. Nevertheless, we feel that this is a valid and relatively inexpensive way of providing some evidence as to the magnitude of the total losses (dropouts and no-shows). It also enabled us to check roughly whether the detailed information about the dropouts was likely to hold true for the no-shows as well.

The definition of no-shows provided some difficulty. And so did such terms as 'course', 'program', 'year'. The definitions of most of the other variables (sex, age, etc.) are self evident. Other terms (e.g., what the 'achievement levels' were, what the various parents' occupational classifications include) are explained when the findings are discussed.

A no-show is a student who, not being in the final year of his program, put in a tentative course registration in spring of the academic year (usually a set of first and alternative course choices) indicating he intended to continue with his program, and then did not register with his school (or any school in that system) at the beginning of the next academic year.

Program is a term which is becoming obsolete in Ontario secondary schools, but some systems still use it. During the pilot studies we were asked to include a program characteristic, since systems wished to know whether the magnitude of their loss from one program differed from that of another. In any case, sometimes the term program has to be invoked to make it quite clear who is or is not a no-show or a dropout. For example: if a student was registered in a two-year occupations program, and did not return to the secondary school for a third year, he was not judged to be a no-show under our definition. If, on the other hand, having completed the two-year program, in the spring of 1975 he entered a preliminary registration for a number of courses, providing evidence that he intended, in effect, to transfer to a four-year program, and *then* did not show in September, he was judged to be a no-show of a four-year program. Similarly, if a student was registered in a four-year program in a high school on the semester system, and had enough credits to graduate with a secondary school diploma at the end of the fall term, and did not return to school in February, he was not judged to be a (within-year) dropout. But if he was on the semester system, completing his fourth year in January and had, in September, by his program registration, indicated that from January to June he would be beginning a five-year program, studying courses which would provide credit for the secondary school honour graduation diploma, and *then* did not return in February, he was judged to be a dropout from a five-year program. All this is not as 'chancy' as it appears. School personnel know precisely which program a student is attributed to. If they still use the program designation it is because it serves a purpose. Since it was included at their request we must assume that it is used accurately. Systems no longer using these appellations did not report them for their dropouts.

Many of the September no-shows between the equivalent of year-4 and year-5 are students who, having completed the work for the graduation diploma and intending to study for the honour graduation diploma, signified their intention by registering a preliminary set of courses in the usual manner. They then changed their minds over the summer. Objection may be made to considering such students as no-shows, but some consistent position must be taken on these definitions which will minimize the danger of double counting (a common weakness of dropout studies) while ensuring that the loss is not underestimated either.

When we refer to 'year' we mean the academic year, which in Ontario begins immediately after Labour Day in September, and finishes toward the end of June. It may be divided in various ways, some schools being on a semester system and others on a year with division into terms. In both, however, students' *intentions* to attend secondary school are demonstrated by registering for a series of courses, the successful completion of which will provide credits toward a graduation certificate or diploma.

1

How many dropouts?

(a) The numbers

We asked ourselves two questions:

- How many students are leaving Ontario secondary schools without completing their programs successfully (i.e., graduating)?
- Is their number increasing?

First we shall deal with the within-year dropouts. Then we shall add the no-shows. Having shown the magnitude of the loss for our sample we shall then generalize to Ontario as a whole.

The twenty-six boards of our sample had an enrollment for September 1974 of 249,805* secondary school students. This represents 42.4 percent of the Ontario secondary school enrollment for the academic year 1974-75. These boards reported 20,027 dropouts from their schools during the academic year, e.g., 8.1 percent. However, a few of the boards (although they had been asked to include all their schools) reported dropouts from only some of their schools. This reduces the referent enrollment to 248,114 but it does not greatly change the dropout rate. A rate of 8.1 percent applied to an enrollment of 589,650 gives an estimate of secondary school within-year dropouts in Ontario in 1974-75 of 47,762. This is a crude way of estimating and throughout the text, with reference to various sub-samples, we may suggest some other estimates of within-year dropout loss, but this figure of 47,762 may be regarded as our basic estimate.

The figure of 248,114 only slightly reduces the proportion which our participating schools represent of the total provincial secondary school enrollment (from 42.4 percent to 42.1 percent). This still is a very large sample. We shall be referring to this figure, and the board totals which make it up, whenever we mention the enrollment of participating boards.

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* Based on the Ministry of Education's computer printout showing September 30th enrollment by school.

Unfortunately, only sixteen of the boards returned the forms reporting their number of no-shows as of 30th September 1975. The mail strike interfered with the return, and some were received as late as January 1976. We were notified of 4933 no-shows. They represent 4.1 percent of the 1974-75 enrollment of the reporting boards. The 16 boards which reported no shows represent 47 percent of our sample. Therefore, if we assume they are sufficiently representative to stand for the total, we would estimate the number of no-shows as 10,666 (i.e., 4.3 percent of the previous year's enrollment). The combined loss to these boards would be 30,693, or 12.4 percent of their enrollment.*

If we assume that these boards are typical, and the losses which they experienced are similar to those which occurred in the province as a whole, then in Ontario in 1974-75 there were 47,762 dropouts and 25,355 no-shows, a combined loss of 73,117, which represents 12.4 percent of the September 1974 enrollment. This is well below the level which many local studies suggested was the condition in Ontario in recent years.

How reliable are these figures? What evidence do we have that they give a more accurate picture than the many studies which have received publicity in recent years (all of which seem to suggest that the loss is much greater)? Any general weakness in the sample represented by the cooperating boards should be kept in mind as we discuss the characteristics, plans, etc., of the dropouts. For the present we are merely concerned to demonstrate that an estimate of the total magnitude of the loss, based on the loss of these boards, will be reasonably accurate for the province as a whole. We opted for a very large sample to ensure that the analysis of each category of response to the questionnaire would include a fairly large number, even if the overall response rate should be no more than 25 percent (quite good for a mailed questionnaire). The response rate exceeded that (averaging 40.6 percent). On the identity information for the pool of dropouts we had a 100 percent response from most participating boards because they reported *all* the losses from *all* their secondary schools.

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* See table 1. The numbered tables are in the Appendix.

The list of cooperating systems was chosen to represent all geographical regions of Ontario, large systems and small ones, urban systems, county jurisdictions, small boards in the north, systems with mixed English and French schools, systems having only English language schools, and some having the year-1 and year-2 classes of the Roman Catholic separate school boards.

There was under-representation of the northwestern region because of a teachers' strike rather late in the organization of the survey; one of the boards found it impossible to participate. At that stage we could not arrange a substitute. The sample over-represents the large populations in the province rather more than had been our original intention. Another weakness (not serious for considering the province as a whole, but for detailed study of the region) is the under-representation of eastern Ontario, both the eastern region and the Ottawa Valley region. Again the under-representation was caused by one of the two proposed boards withdrawing late in the arrangements. However, the numbers are such that a larger sample for this region would not greatly change the provincial picture.

The really unfortunate under-representation is the Ottawa Valley region. It proved to be exceedingly difficult to obtain the participation of these boards; their under-representation occurred in all the OISE dropout studies. We had hoped to include two systems from this region. Failure to do so was a disappointment because the region contains a large number of French-language schools. The inclusion of a northern board with a large number of French-speaking students somewhat compensated for the loss. The reader should be aware when we are discussing detailed findings that although the responses are valid for the province as a whole, and the boards chosen from the three regions in question are representative of their regions, these regions have been given insufficient weight. Therefore the detailed picture for these regions might differ from that of the province in a way not sufficiently accounted for by the boards which participated in the survey.

We did not intend to stress the analysis by region so the weakness is minimized. The ministry task force was interested primarily in the all-Ontario findings, and the cooperating boards primarily in their own findings and comparison between their scores and those of the province as a whole.

The answer to our first question is that the loss from within-year dropouts and no-shows in 1974-75 was 12.4 percent of the

September 1974 enrollment, which produces an estimated total for Ontario of 73,117. We discuss later the variance of dropout rates by the characteristics sampled. Estimates based on those data differ from numbers based upon the overall data. The sum of the regional estimates is higher because different regions affect the total overall figure according to their weighting. Thus the central region with a (within-year) dropout rate of 8.6 percent, since it has one third of the provincial enrollment, has the effect of raising the total. The recorded dropout rate, however, does not greatly change by using different bases; it increases only from 8.1 percent to 8.3 percent.

To discover whether the dropout rate has been increasing in recent years we used estimates based on the data of the two small OISE studies. The earlier surveys covered dropouts only from the upper three years of secondary school so, in order to make the figures comparable to those of 1974-75, they had to be adjusted.

In 1972-73 the total secondary school enrollment in the province was 583,013. The thirteen county boards covered by the survey had a total enrollment of 84,162, a participation rate of 16.8 percent. However, only grades 11-13 were surveyed and only seven of the nine regions were represented. For comparison purposes, we had to provide estimates for the missing data.

The average participation rate of boards (for those regions for which we have participation, i.e., midnorthern to eastern) was 16.8 percent. Applying this rate to the two non-participating regions, we obtained an estimated participation enrollment.

According to the 1974-75 survey, year-1 and year-2 dropouts represent 27.4 percent and 24.7 percent of the total. If we apply these proportions to the 1972-73 figures we obtain an estimated total dropout figure of 5971, which is 7.1 percent of total participating enrollment. Applying this percentage to the estimated enrollment, we arrived at the total estimate of 6950 dropouts for the estimated enrollment, and a total of 41,394 dropouts for the province as a whole.

In the 1973-74 study there were eight cooperating boards. This was an even less satisfactory sample than the one of the year before, in that there were no participants from the northwest, the Niagara region or the Ottawa Valley. Not all the schools of every system participated (this was also true of the first study). The two large boards of that survey wished to cover their entire secondary school dropouts. Elsewhere in this report, where the 1973-74 figures are quoted we make it clear whether we are citing their grade 9 and 10 dropouts or only the losses from the upper grades. For purposes of this estimate only the 11-13 dropouts are used. If we repeat the calculations we did for the 1972-73 sample, we can derive a rough estimate of the total within-year dropout loss in Ontario secondary schools in 1973-74 by applying the rate of 7.9 percent to the total secondary enrollment (585,725), which gives the figure 46,272.

In summary: The reply to the question as to whether the number of dropouts is growing is, "Yes, both absolutely and relatively". The absolute number increased over the three years and the rates of loss rose. The precise degree of change depends upon which base is being used for the estimate. As we show in the next section the magnitude of dropout loss (and hence the rate) varies tremendously from region to region, grade to grade, system to system, school to school, achievement level to achievement level, sex to sex, age to age, etc. So if we are making a series of estimates for, say, age groups, and then we sum them to equal the whole, it will differ from an overall estimate to the degree that any one sub-estimate is weighted somewhat differently from its actual weight in the whole. That is not to say that individual estimates of the total number of Ontario dropouts, by various sub groupings (by language, say) are not useful, but their weakness should be recognized.

(b) The characteristics of the dropouts

We have spent some time trying to illustrate that it is not an easy matter to provide accurate figures on dropouts. The reporting system is confused. The varied definitions used in different studies are misleading because the studies are describing different things. One of the most common causes for over-estimation is the double counting caused by using gross loss figures and not correcting them for re-entries.

Another reason for widely differing figures is that there is a considerable difference in the loss rates in different systems at different grade levels, by sex, by achievement levels, by socio-economic characteristics of the students' parents, by the time of year the student leaves the school, and a great many other variables. The sum of a group of small studies, each unique to a particular board, does not necessarily mirror the provincial situation on any one of these characteristics. A sample chosen on one basis may reveal quite atypical distributions on particular characteristics. The only really acceptable comparison is when the same sample is used, with the same set of variables, over time. The only way one can safely talk about the total provincial picture is to do a study which covers the whole province. The best basis for study would be annually gathered statistical data, and this study for the ministry task force was a step in that direction.

To illustrate the wide difference in the dropout rates we shall review the survey sample by a few of its identity characteristics.

Loss rate, by board

We found that the 1974-75 dropout rates varied from 6.4 percent of the participating systems of the midwestern region to 10.6 percent of the systems of the midnorthern region and the Ottawa Valley (see table 2).* The variation by region in the 1972-73 and 1973-74 pilot studies was from 3.1 percent to 10.2 percent, and 6.3 percent to 17.3 percent. Table 3 shows that the 1974-75 loss rates by participating board varied from a low of 4.0 percent to a high of 14.3 percent. The reported no-shows varied from a low of 1.4 percent to a high of 6.8 percent. The estimated no-shows for the ten boards which did not report, based on the relationship of no-shows to dropouts for the other boards of their region, varies even more — from 0.8 percent to 8.1 percent (See table 1).

If we rank order the 16 boards from which we received both dropout and no-show reports we get the picture which is shown in the table at the top of the next page.

The rank ordering changes significantly when the additional loss of the no-shows is taken into account:

Board 045:	drops from second lowest loss rate to tenth
Board 053:	drops from fourth lowest to twelfth
Board 062:	improves from sixth lowest loss rate to first (i.e., lowest loss rate)
Board 085:	improves from tenth to tied for fifth
Board 092:	improves from twelfth to seventh

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* From now on in the report we shall not add an estimate of no-shows to each of our comments, since we do not have the same detailed statistics for the no-shows (between-year dropouts) as for the within-year dropouts. The reader should keep in mind our estimate that no-shows represent a loss of roughly 4-5 percent of enrollment.

Rank Order (Lowest to Highest) of Within-Year Dropouts and No-Shows 1974-75

Board code	Within school year dropouts	No-shows	Total
011	8	6.5	8.5
021	15	11	14
022	14	14	15
031	16	12	16
032	10	13	13
033	13	8.5	11
043	10	5	8.5
044	7	8.5	8.5
045	2	15	10
051	1	10	2
053	4	16	12
062	6	1	1
081	5	6.5	4
083	3	4	3
085	10	2.5	5.5
092	12	2.5	7

Loss rates by month

We wished to learn whether there was a definite pattern in the loss rates by month or if they were fairly even throughout the year. The study of 1972-73 was carried out at the end of the academic year, so it provided no evidence to answer this question. The study of 1973-74 was set up to question dropouts by month as they left the school but it started only in January, so the losses from September to December are grouped together. The usefulness of its data is limited.

The most helpful are our 1974-75 data. There are two aspects to the question. First we shall demonstrate that there is considerable variation in dropout loss by month. Then we shall try to define its patterns.

There were 20,027 dropouts reported by our co-operating secondary schools. The exit loss by month was as follows:

Month	Number of dropouts	Percentage
September	2,805	14.0
October	3,824	19.1
November	2,513	12.6
December	1,209	6.0
January	1,969	9.8
February	2,343	11.7
March	1,299	6.5
April	2,002	10.0
May	1,816	9.1
June	244	1.2
Total	20,024*	100.0

*Excludes three for whom the month of leaving was not reported.

In many boards the June losses are reported with the May ones. Since the upper grades finish early in the final month of school no dropouts are counted. So for most of our analysis we have linked May-June.

It is apparent that the different months' losses represent different proportions of the year's losses. The precise contours of the loss pattern vary from board to board. The peak loss month was not always October. In two boards September was higher, and in another it was equally high; in one case the February loss was highest. The second highest loss month was most frequently November, but February was second highest in a number of boards, and September, January and May-June were also occasionally the second highest month of loss. Some boards do not really count enrollment till 30th September, the date 'stock' is taken for purposes of the principal's report. In such cases, of course, the October figures appear high. In September 1974 apparently four of our boards had no dropouts, but their totals for the next month were among the highest reported, and much higher than their own loss rates of subsequent months. Within any month the loss rates vary tremendously: in September the lowest (apart from those not reporting) was 0.8 percent, the highest 29.0 percent. In the other months the variation was almost as great, as we see from the following:

Month	Lowest	Highest
September	0.8%	29.0%
October	11.9	34.2
November	6.5	19.3
December	0.8	9.9
January	2.9	21.1
February	3.1	21.0
March	2.2	13.2
April	2.2	15.7
May-June	2.6	17.1

Since the loss varies in absolute numbers month by month from board to board, their loss rates will vary too (i.e., the percentage which that month's loss represents of that month's enrollment). The loss rates which we have been quoting thus far are annual rates, the proportion which dropouts represent of the 30th September enrollment of that academic year. We shall come back later to describing the loss patterns by month; for the present we have demonstrated that there is variation in the loss rates by month. We shall continue with the demonstration that loss rates vary greatly depending upon the factor used to measure, the segment of the year being measured, and the board, school or geographical region under scrutiny.

Loss rates of boards by sex

We calculated dropout rates by board and sex and by board and grade (see tables 4 and 5). These clearly illustrate the degree of variation we have been talking about. Male dropouts in 1974-75 ranged from 5.0 percent to 15.1 percent; female rates from 2.9 percent to 13.6 percent. And the rank ordering of the boards by the dropout rates by sex varied considerably.

One board had the lowest loss rate for each sex, but that is rare. Apart from the few boards at the extremes of generally very low or generally very high loss rates, the rest are quite scrambled by rank ordering.

Loss rates of boards by year of program (grade)

This is also true of the loss rates by grade. Most commonly grade 13 has the highest loss rate of the boards (16 out of 26), but grade 11 also is highest in a number of cases, and grades 10 and 12 in a few.

Grade 9 was never the highest loss rate of a board. The lowest rate by grade is generally that of grade 9 (in all cases but one, where grades 10 and 11 were lower). The levels of loss rate by grade vary greatly for the different boards, as we see from the following:

Year	Lowest	Highest
1	1.3%	9.5%
2	3.0	12.6
3	4.4	19.6
4	4.6	12.7
5	4.6	17.7

In some boards the highest rate recorded is below the lowest rate of another board.

Variation is even greater by school. But at the level of the province the variation by school is not a matter easily affected by policy. The appropriate level to influence the *school* dropout rate is the board, and the computer materials from the study, which were supplied to the cooperating boards, enable them to document these loss rates if they so desire. Here we shall merely demonstrate them by one table (table 6) which gives, for each board, the lowest school loss rate and the highest. The table shows the magnitude of variation among the schools of a single board — for example, the highest school dropout rate of board *#074* is 10.7 times the lowest school rate. Provincially, the range of percentage loss in schools, in 1974, was 1.8 percent —39.7 percent.

Loss rates by region by sex and by grade left

The variation in loss rates by region is noticeable, but not as great as that by board or by school. Since we have already established that variation does exist (and is considerable) we have merely included the data in the Appendix (see tables 7a and 7b).

(c) Patterns of dropout loss by month

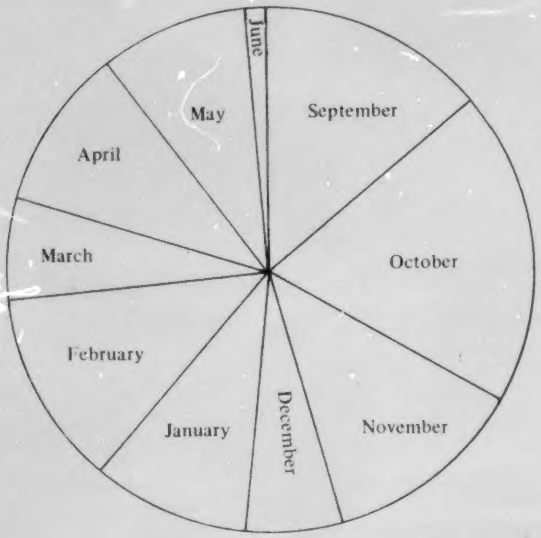
Having demonstrated that there are different loss rates, depending upon precisely what sub-groups are being measured, and that there are different rates according to the months of the academic year, we shall now analyse the monthly loss data to reveal the patterns.

Monthly dropout loss by sex

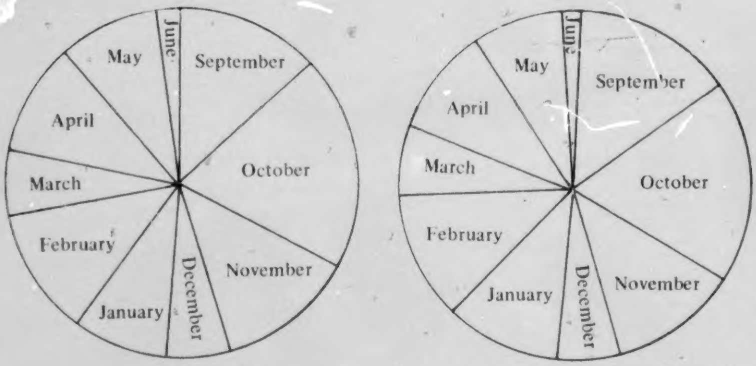
For 1974-75 virtually every dropout from our cooperating schools was reported by month (even though in some cases two months' losses are amalgamated -i.e., at the ends of the year, September-October or May-June). But we have only 19,762 for whom both sex and month-left were reported. There is statistically a highly significant relationship between the sex of the dropout and the month he or she left school. Females had a greater tendency to leave in September and January, males in December or May (see figures 1-3). The girls seem to leave at the beginning of terms, the boys at the end. Examination dates differ in different boards and we cannot tell from a monthly report whether students leave after they have received adverse examination results (as has been suggested). This might account for the January departure of the girls but not their September ones. In fact, it is our impression that departures following examination results would occur in December (before the Christmas holidays) and March (before the Easter holidays). Those recorded for January and April are more likely to represent students who fail to return after holidays. Certainly a break in school attendance seems to make the dropout decision easier. Although they are unequal 'halves', the school year in popular opinion is divided before and after Christmas. To the public the school work year consists of September to mid-December inclusive, a holiday break; then January to April inclusive, with Easter somewhere in the last month providing a second break; and then two final tidying up months which are devoted to remedial work, review, re-examining the border line cases, etc. This being so, the logical time to leave is either just at the beginning of a body of work (when the student realizes that 'nothing has changed') or at the end (where it becomes clear that progress is as 'bad as expected').

In the 1973-74 statistics the male-female total losses for the period September to December were more or less what one would expect. However, the within-period variation in flow, which we did not record, might have been just as great as in 1974-75. For the months of January to June, when the dropouts were recorded by month, there was an evident difference in the exit flow of the boys and girls. It is somewhat similar to that seen in 1974-75, but is not statistically significant. The girls are over-represented among the January dropouts and, even more, in March. The boys are over-represented in February and April but even more in May-June.

Figure 1 DROPOUTS–MONTH LEFT BY SEX, 1974-75



TOTAL



MALE

FEMALE

Figure 2 NUMERICAL DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALE DROPOUTS BY MONTH, 1973-74 and 1974-75

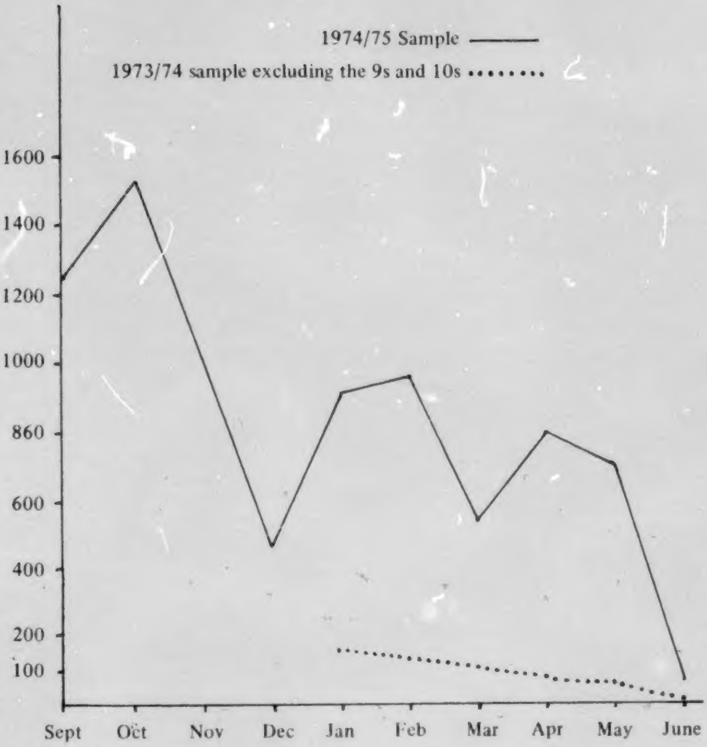
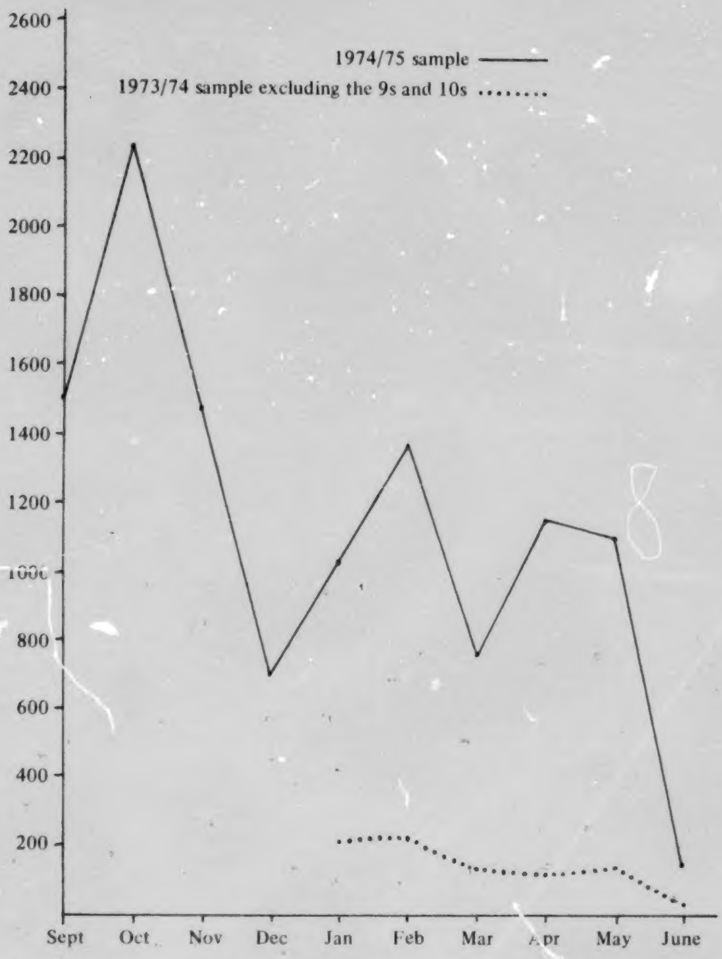


Figure 3 NUMERICAL DISTRIBUTION OF MALE DROPOUTS BY MONTH, 1973-74 and 1974-75



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Monthly dropout loss by grade (year)

There were 18,557 dropouts for whom the schools reported the month left and the year of program. The relationship between the distributions of these variables is statistically highly significant — i.e., it could not occur by chance. The month a dropout is likely to leave school varies with the grade he or she is in. The grade 9 dropouts tend to leave at the end of the year. They are under-represented in the first term and over-represented from February on, and are a rising proportion of each month's loss to a peak in May (e.g., in February, 16.9 percent; May, 24.1 percent; June, 19.9 percent). The grade 10s have a somewhat similar flow-pattern but they show a slight rise in departures in December (27.0 percent of that month's total although they are only 25.6 percent of the sample). Their departures really become frequent, however, from March on — 28.2 percent, 28.3 percent, 29.6 percent, 29.2 percent. The upper three grades, on the other hand, all have heavier dropouts at the beginning of the year and taper off by February. When the large urban boards and the remaining sample are separated, some interesting differences emerge. A very high proportion of the former's October dropouts in 1974-75 were from year-2. They represent 34.5 percent of that month's loss, although they were only 25.4 percent of total drop-outs. For the remaining sample, the October grade 10 losses were about what would be expected.

The peak *absolute* loss occurs in each grade in October (because the October monthly loss is the heaviest for the year, 21 percent of the sub-sample). However, in terms of the percentage which the grade's dropouts represent of the month's loss, the 'peak' loss months are as follows:

1974-75

	Large urban board		Rest of sample	
Year	Month	Percentage	Month	Percentage
1	May	32.0	May	21.6
2	Oct.	34.5	May	29.6
3	Nov.	28.3	Nov.	28.5
4	Dec.	20.9	Feb.	23.3
5	Nov.	14.6	Sept.	15.0

1973-74

	Sample including Grades 9 and 10		Sample excluding Grades 9 and 10	
Year	Month	Percentage	Month	Percentage
1	June	9.5	—	—
2	June	28.6	—	—
3	Feb.	42.1	May	52.4
4	Jan.	38.3	Jan.	45.8
5	June	19.0	June	30.8

There are at least two general patterns of loss by month — the grade 9 and 10 dropouts rise to a peak of loss toward the final months of the academic year, the upper three grades lose their students early in the year and by the month of February their dropout flow has started to reduce. These are shown in figures 4 to 6.

Monthly dropout loss by achievement level

In the 1974-75 survey there were 10,782 students for whom we received a report of their average mark and the month they left school.

In absolute terms the peak loss month for all achievement levels was October — more than twice the next highest figure (which occurred the next month). For the A and B students the numbers were 52(25) and 264(134). For the C and D students October and November represent the highest absolute loss, but the difference between them was proportionately less: 777(466) and 756(505). It is the F student loss flow which differs — October is highest (511), April next (419) then May (410). As a proportion of the month's losses the patterns differ (see figures 7 to 10): The A students are 1.7 percent of the sub-sample. They have two high loss periods, October (2.2 percent of the month's total) and January- February (2.1 percent and 2.0 percent). The Bs contribution to each month's losses reduces steadily from September to May (except for February) from 12.9 percent to 6.0 percent. The Cs show an equally steady decline (except for a very slight rise in April) from 35.3 percent of the September dropouts to 19.5 percent of those of May. The Cs represent 28.5 percent of the sub-sample. The Ds start at the dropout level one would expect for their representation in the sub-

Figure 4 NUMERICAL DISTRIBUTION OF 1974/75 DROPOUTS BY MONTH LEFT AND YEAR

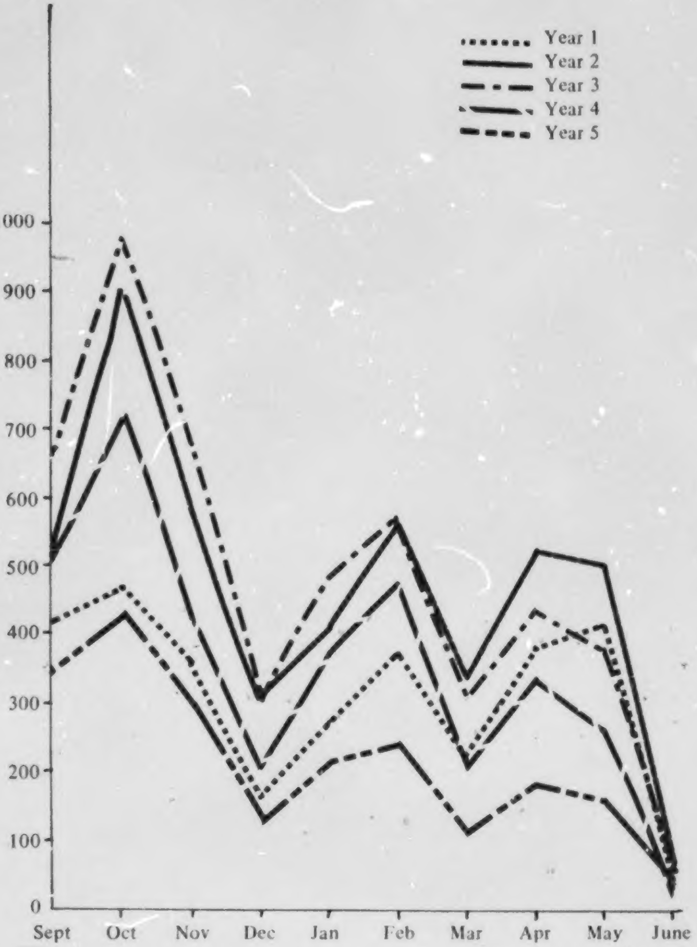


Figure 5 NUMERICAL DISTRIBUTION OF 1973/74 DROPOUTS (INCLUDING GRADES 9 & 10) BY MONTH LEFT AND YEAR

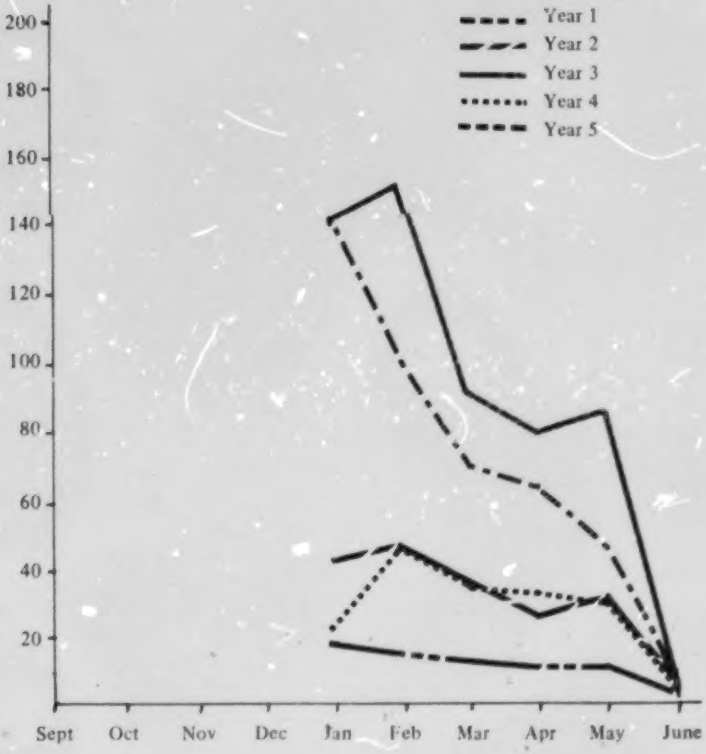
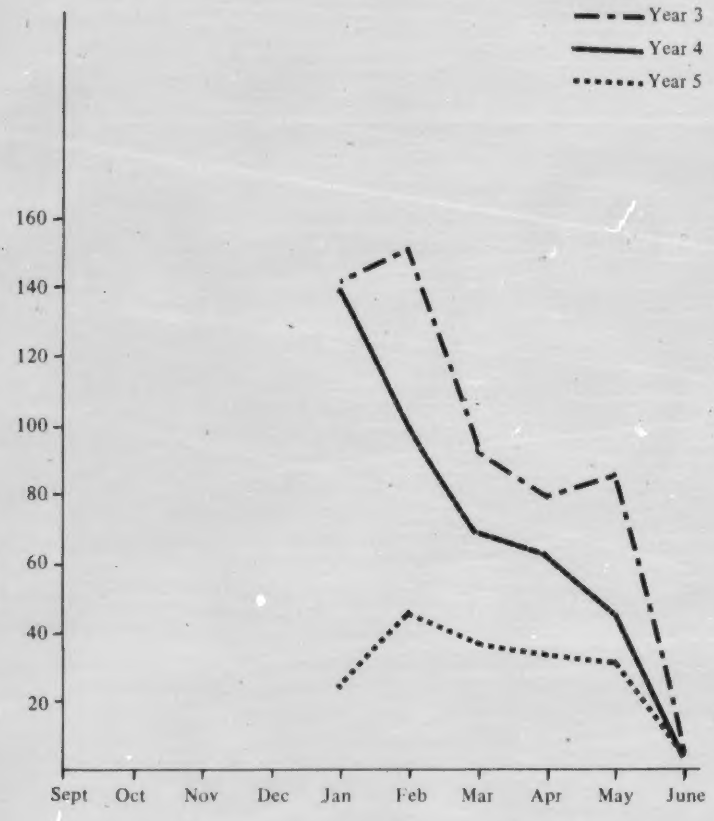


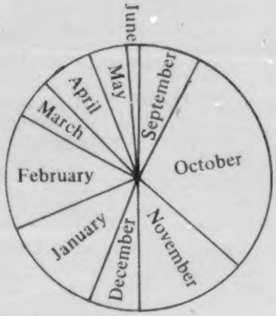
Figure 6 NUMERICAL DISTRIBUTION OF 1973/74 DROPOUTS (EXCLUDING GRADES 9 & 10) BY MONTH LEFT AND YEAR



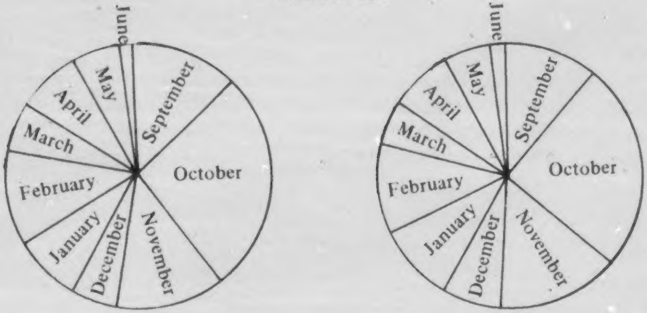
sample (about 33 percent), and stay around that level each month till January. In February they drop to 30 percent and thereafter they fluctuate with higher than usual proportions in March and June. The Fs are quite the reverse. They build up steadily as a proportion of each month's total from September to May (17.0 percent to 41.8 percent). The relationship between the achievement level of the students and the month they drop out is statistically highly significant. This was also found in the 1973-74 data.

In summary: There are very definite patterns to the dropout flow by month. Given an accurate statistical time series we should be able to predict the monthly loss. Such predictions can become part of a board's annual enrollment forecasting. At the provincial level the fluctuation in monthly loss rates is more difficult to study because we do not generally have appropriate statistics. However, with suitable ones the Ministry of Education could, if it wished, monitor policies designed to induce boards to reduce their within-year dropout losses. In our opinion, if a financial incentive were to be used it should be placed at two time points in the year (October, and either January or February). As things now stand, boards receive first term payments for a sizeable group of youngsters who receive service for one school month or less. And they receive second term payments for a similar group. Moreover in the second term the wastage flow accelerates month by month. Perhaps a revision of the grant structure to accommodate this loss and re-entry flow could be used to curb the increasing dropout rates.

Figure 7 DROPOUTS – MONTH LEFT BY ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL, 1974-75

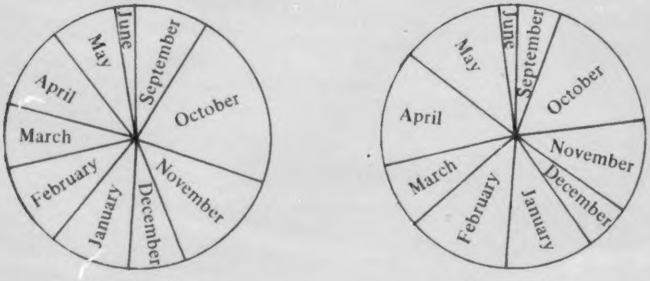


GRADE A



GRADE B

GRADE C



GRADE D

GRADE F

Figure 8 NUMERICAL DISTRIBUTION OF 1974/75 DROPOUTS BY MONTH AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

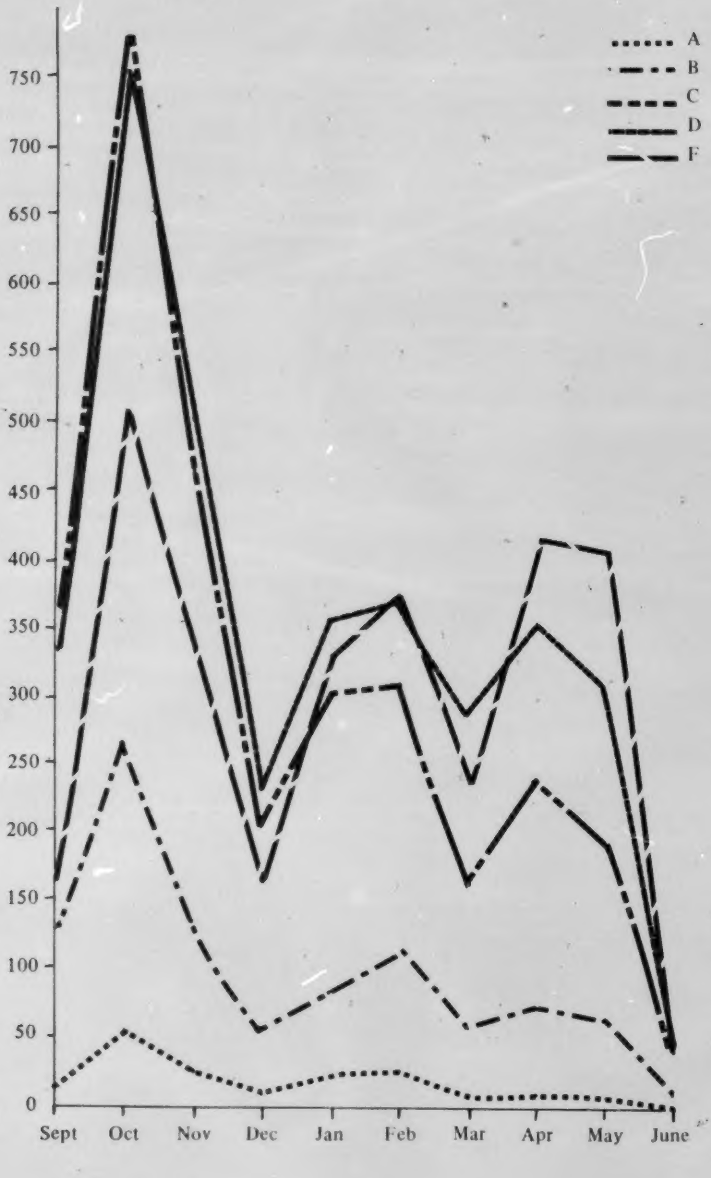


Figure 9 NUMERICAL DISTRIBUTION OF 1973/74 DROPOUTS (INCLUDING GRADES 9 & 10) BY MONTH AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

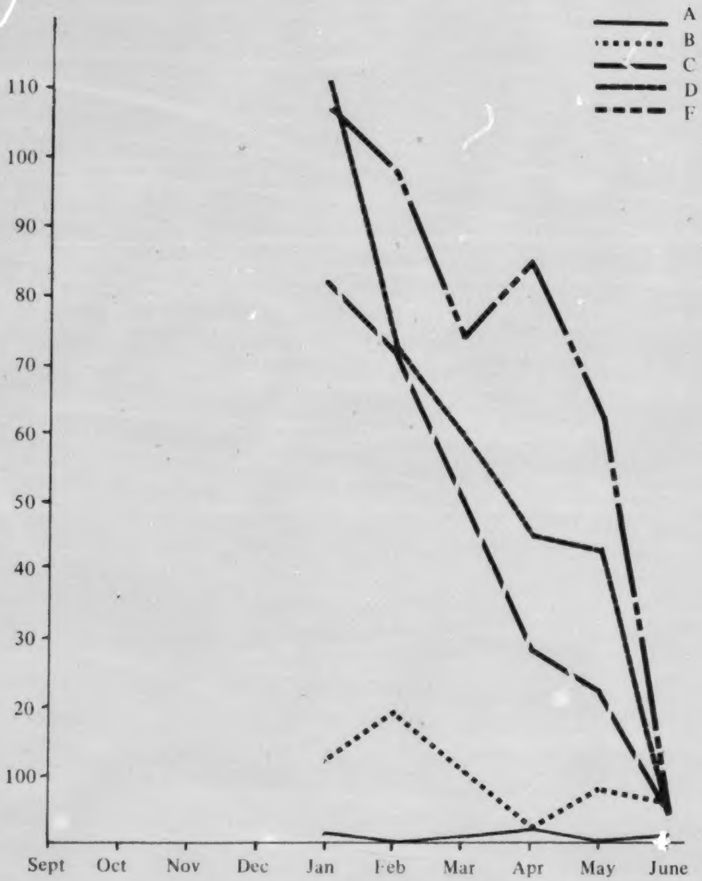
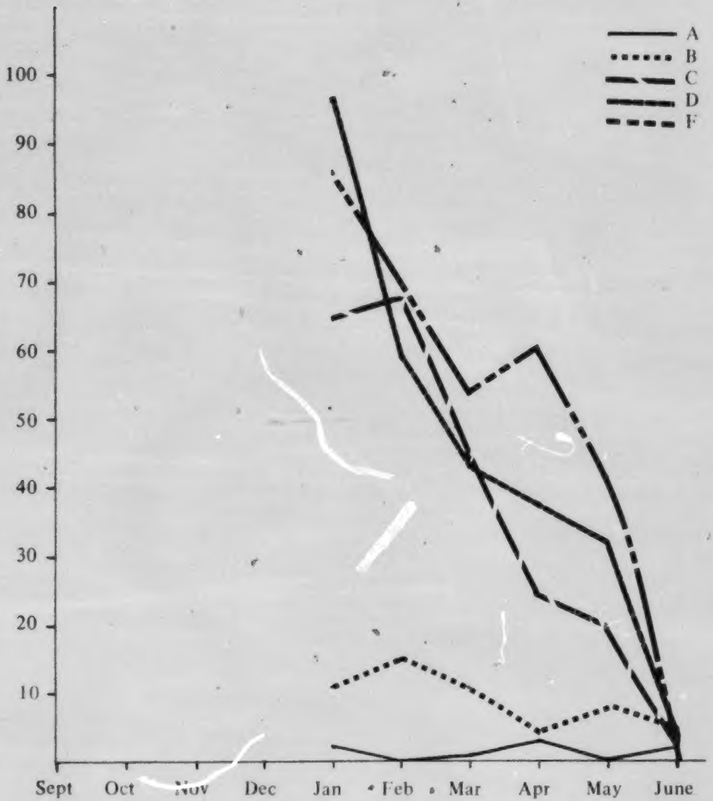


Figure 10 NUMERICAL DISTRIBUTION OF 1973/74 DROPOUTS (EXCLUDING GRADES 9 & 10) BY MONTH AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL



2

Who is leaving?

Sex

Sex was reported for all but 264 of the 20,027 dropouts reported in 1974-75 by the 26 participating boards. Among the group for whom the sex is known, 58.1 percent were male, 41.9 percent female. In the province in the academic year 1974-75 (September enrollment) 305,429 (51.8 percent) of the secondary school students were male, 284,221 (48.2 percent) were female. Therefore among dropouts the males clearly are represented beyond what would be expected.

If we assume that the ratio of males to females among the reported dropouts is typical for the province as a whole, and we know the relationship of enrollment in our participating schools to the total secondary school enrollment of the province, we can estimate the number of male and female within-year dropouts which probably occurred in the academic year 1974-75 as follows:

- estimated total dropouts, 47,762.
- ratio of males to females among dropouts, 58.1:41.9.
- estimated 27,750 male dropouts and 20,013 female dropouts in Ontario in 1974-75.

Age

We do not know the age of any dropouts from one system in our sample because the list from which we obtained the students' names did not contain this information. Age was reported for 96.2 percent of the other 14,592 dropouts.

The percentage distribution for those whose age was reported is shown in column 3 below. If we assume that the age distribution of all the dropouts of Ontario was similar, and we use the total estimate of 47,762, we obtain the estimated figures given in column 4 below:

Age (in years) (1)	Percentage distribution of secondary school enrollment in Ontario (2)	Percentage distribution of dropouts in sample (3)	Estimated number of dropouts in Ontario in 1974-75 (4)
15 or younger	50.6	6.2	2,961
16	21.8	33.6	16,048
17	17.1	27.4	13,087
18	8.2	22.0	10,508
19	1.6	7.8	3,725
20 or older	0.7	3.0	1,433
Total	100.0	100.0	
N =	589,650	14,592	47,762

By reference to the age distribution of the total Ontario secondary school enrollment (column 2) we can see how typical is the age distribution of the students who leave school (within the year) without completing their programs. Only in exceptional circumstances is it legally possible to leave school under the age of 16. So it is not surprising that few dropouts appear in the youngest age category, although that category covers over half the secondary school enrollment. Since this is the case, all other age categories among the dropouts will be noticeably larger than among the student body generally. Therefore, we adjusted the distribution by subtracting the category '15 and younger' from both sets and prepared a percentage distribution, by age, of the remainders. It looks like this:

Age (in years)	Percentage distribution of Ontario secondary school enrollment older than 15	Percentage distribution of total dropouts older than 15
16	44.1	35.8
17	34.5	29.2
18	16.6	23.5
19	3.3	8.3
20 +	1.5	3.2
Total	100.0	100.0
N =	291,311	13,684

The younger students are under-represented among the dropouts. The older the student, the greater the probability he/she will drop out.

From the data of our survey we can cross-tabulate the 1974-75 dropouts by age and sex (see table 8). Because we lack either sex or age for a number of the dropouts our sample is reduced to 14,572. However, it is still substantial; it represents 2.5 percent of Ontario's 1974-75 secondary school enrollment, 5.9 percent of the enrollment of the participating schools in the study, and 72.8 percent of their dropouts. There is statistically a highly significant relationship between the age and sex of a dropout, i.e., these distributions are most unlikely to have occurred by chance. The older the dropout the more likely he is to be a male. The turning point is age 18. Below that age the males are under-represented, above it over-represented. The male-female ratio of this sub-sample is 58.5:41.5, not very different from the ratio for the survey as a whole, 58.1:41.9.

From our survey we can cross-tabulate the 1974-75 dropouts by age and the grade (or year)* of school they left.

There are 14,180 dropouts for whom both age and grade were reported (see table 9). They represent 2.4 percent of the provincial secondary school enrollment that year, 5.7 percent of the enrollment of participating schools and 70.8 percent of their dropouts. Obviously, the younger the dropout the lower the year left, but there is some interesting overlap: 58 percent of those 15 or under dropped out of year-1 (grade 9) but quite a high number (296, almost 35 percent) left from year-2. These students were 15 or younger when they left the equivalent of grade 10, so they obviously had not been retarded behind normal progress through the school system.

The peak leaving year for those aged 15 and under is 1; for the 16 year olds, 2; the 17 year olds, 3; the 18 year olds, 4; the 19 year olds, 4 with 5 being equally important; and for the 20 year olds, 5, with 4 being almost as important. The unexpected numbers are not the ones on the diagonal (which is boxed on the table to make it evi-

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*The grade or year of the student is defined by credits completed, e.g.,
Year 1 = grade 9 = 0 - 6 credits;
Year 2 = grade 10 = 7 - 13 credits;
Year 3 = grade 11 = 14 - 20 credits;
Year 4 = grade 12 = 21 - 26 credits;
Year 5 = grade 13 = 27 or more credits.

dent) but those lying above and below it — particularly the young students dropping out of higher grades than one would expect them to be in.

There are 10,690 dropouts for whom we have both age and achievement level*, which is equivalent to 1.8 percent of the Ontario secondary school enrollment in 1974-75, 4.3 percent of the secondary school enrollment of the participating schools and 54.4 percent of their dropouts. Statistically there is a highly significant relationship between the dropout's age and his academic achievement (see table 10).

The A level students are distributed much as expected. Few leave school before completing their programs (1.6 percent of the dropouts). Their number peaks among the 16 year olds. But if one remembers that under a bell curve distribution we would expect to find 15 percent of the students with A average among the secondary school population, it is clear that the A students rarely drop out. Considering the number of dropouts reported, if the As dropped out according to a 15 percent representation we would have had 3004 A achievement level dropouts from these schools. If we assume that the 1.6 percent rate of the sub-sample can be applied to all our participating schools we would have had 320 A level dropouts in our survey instead of 176. Since our sample represents 42.1 percent of the secondary school population we would estimate the A level dropouts in the province in 1974-75 at 413.

How one views the loss to the school system of such a group of highly intelligent students depends upon one's philosophy. These youngsters can be regarded either as a tragic waste of academic potential which is not being formally trained, or as youth able to learn by informal means anything they decide to learn and, therefore, representing that portion of the school population which can most easily overcome the handicap of an incomplete secondary school education. But, however one views their departure, so small a loss stream cannot be said to constitute a problem.

The B level losses are more substantial (9.1 percent). The general age distribution of the survey (which is not greatly different from the percentages found on the right of the table) should be kept in mind. Eighteen-year-old dropouts represent 30 percent of the B level losses, although 18-year-olds only formed 23 percent of the sample.

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* Achievement is represented by the average mark of the student, the most recent one recorded before he left the school. It was reported by schools from their official records. We do not have this information for any of the dropouts from one large system. For no other system is this item entirely lacking but its inclusion on the monthly reporting form required more work of the school secretary. Generally marks are not recorded on the attendance files which have most of the other identity information which we desired. Therefore the response was not uniformly good.

The C level losses are concentrated in the middle age range — 17 to 19 years.

The D level losses are about what one would expect among the 16 to 19-year-olds, and under-represented at the two ends of the age scale.

The Fs are heavily grouped in the two young categories (they are 43 percent of the dropouts aged 15 and younger, and 33 percent of those aged 16; 46.7 percent of the Fs are in these two age groups, although only 38.0 percent of the sample for which we have both age and achievement). The Fs are considerably under-represented among the 18-year-olds. This distribution, which is statistically highly significant (i.e., is most unlikely to have occurred by chance), suggests that the students who drop out because they are failing their courses are disproportionately the younger dropouts. This is what we expected, but not to this degree.

Program

We have some sort of program designation for 8861 of the 20,027 reported dropouts (about 44.2 percent). No program designation was received from one large system. 'Program' was reported for 58.4 percent of the remainder of the sample, which provides evidence of how persistent the program nomenclature is, although it has been officially dropped in Ontario. Since there are no statistics which show the province's secondary school enrollment by program in 1974-75, we cannot use our sample to estimate the provincial dropout picture. However, the sample distributions are of some interest, so we shall include a brief general report of them.

About 8 percent of the dropouts had left a 2-year program, 44 percent of 4-year, 23 percent a 5-year, 8 percent a 'general', 4 percent an 'advanced', 8 percent a 'special/occupational', 0.2 percent a 'mature student/part-time/adult' and 4 percent 'other'. For cross-tabulation we concentrated on the 2, 4 and 5-year program designations, which are the common ones.

There are 6679 dropouts for whom sex and one of the three program designations (2, 4 or 5-year) were reported. This number is equivalent to 1.1 percent of Ontario's 1974-75 secondary school enrollment, 2.7 percent of the enrollment of the participating schools and 33.3 percent of their dropouts. The males are over-represented among the 2-year program dropouts and under-represented among the other two.

There are 6569 dropouts for whom we have one of the three program designations and the grade the student left. The peak leaving year for the 2 and 5-year program dropouts is the final year of the program (55 percent of the 2-year left in year-2, 41 percent of the 5-year left in year-5), but this is not the case with the 4-year program dropouts. Their main exit (about one third of the total loss from this program) is from year-3, and the loss from year-2 (28 percent) is greater than that from the final year (21 percent). A probable explanation is that the 4-year program attracts a number of students who might have completed successfully a 2-year occupations training but lack the ability or persistence to complete the 4-year program which is somewhat more demanding academically. The group may also include students who entered the third year of an occupations-course who are deemed to have transferred into a 4-year program (there are such programs offered in our sample of schools). If they then drop out they are recorded as leaving a 4-year program. This would account for the dropouts peaking in the third rather than the final year.

We have 5845 dropouts for whom one of the three program designations was reported and an achievement level. Fifty-nine percent of the A students and about half the B students had left a 5-year program. These two achievement levels are under-represented among the 4-year program dropouts but, interestingly, not among the 2-year program dropouts; 15.6 percent of the dropouts from 2-year programs had an average achievement level of A or B. One may wonder why they were registered in such a program. The Cs may be taken as representing the average, and their distribution by program is not unexpected, except perhaps slightly higher among the 5-year program dropouts; 34 percent of the 5-year program dropouts are Cs, and 28 percent of the 4-year. Fifty-seven percent of the Cs have dropped out of a 4-year program, 36 percent from a 5-year program, 7 percent from a 2-year program.

The picture for the Ds and Fs is reversed. Four-year program dropouts represent about two-thirds (each) of the Ds and Fs but they only represent 61 percent of this sub-sample. Absolutely and proportionately more of the 2-year program dropouts are Fs than any other achievement level, more 4-year dropouts are Ds than any other level, and more 5-year are Cs than any other level. In other words the longer the program the higher the achievement level of the dropout from it. Whether this leads one to favour a policy which concentrates on trying to avert the longer program or shorter program dropout is a matter of philosophy, i.e., how one views the role of the school system in our society, and how one judges the consequences of not completing a secondary school program.

If we take the view that the shorter the program the more likely it is to be geared to direct job-market skills, and the longer the program the more likely it is to be a preparation for some later stage of education *and* we deplore greatly the loss of undeveloped talent *and* regard the educational system as the only (or even the primary) resource for developing talent, *then* we would expend a great deal of effort to keep the 5-year program dropout from leaving school. The high achievement 2-year program dropout should also be the object of much concern because of his potential to complete a 5-year program successfully. On the other hand if we take the initial proposition stated above *and* we deplore greatly the entry into the labour market of students with incomplete occupational skills and low academic potential (as demonstrated by average marks gained in secondary school) *and* we are concerned about youth unemployment and the future job market demand for unskilled labour, *then* we would expend a great deal of effort to keep the 2-year program dropouts in school, particularly those whose achievement level indicates they do not learn quickly or easily.

Grade or year left

The year the student dropped out is determined by the number of completed credits recorded by the time he left the school (incomplete courses are not counted). 'Year' was reported for 18,557 students, which represents 3.1 percent of the Ontario secondary school enrollment of 1974-75, 7.5 percent of the enrollment of the participating schools, and 92.7 percent of their dropouts. Some 16.8 percent of the dropouts had left year-1; 25.6 percent year-2; 26.5 percent year-3; 19.4 percent year-4; and 11.7 percent year-5. This is less than would be expected from grade 9, and more than would be expected from the upper grades — particularly 11 and 13. This may be seen if we compare the percentage distribution-by-year of the dropouts, and the enrollment of the participating schools. For 1974-75 it was as follows:

	Year					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Dropouts	16.8	25.6	26.5	19.4	11.7	100.0%
Their schools	27.0	24.5	21.7	17.9	8.9	100.0%

The dropout problem arises primarily from losses at two grade levels, 11 and 13. The latter seems particularly unfortunate. Surely students who have succeeded in school for more than twelve years could remain there (whatever the rival attraction, or their criticisms of the institution) for a few more months! The males are even more predominant in this sub-sample than generally among our reported dropouts, and considerably over-represented in terms of the sex distribution of enrollment, by grade, in the participating schools. The imbalance is particularly noticeable in grades 9 and 13, and may be seen from the following:

	Year					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Male dropouts	60.1	58.0	55.3	55.8	60.7	57.6%
Males in their schools	52.1	51.5	51.1	51.4	54.5	51.8%

Not only is there a high probability that the dropout will be a male, this is particularly so if he drops out of grade 9 or grade 13. There is an interesting large city phenomenon which should be noted. To illustrate it we shall use the data of one urban board. If we exclude that board the male dropout rate in 1974-75 was 7.9 percent (8717 reported dropouts from a school enrollment of 110,336 males). For that board the male rate was significantly higher, 15.1 percent. Its inclusion in the total sample raises the male rate to 8.9 percent.

The total sample grade 9 dropout rate was 4.6 percent, grade 10, 7.8 percent; grade 11, 9.1; grade 12, 8.1; grade 13, 9.8. All these rates are deflated by the exclusion of a portion of the 1470 dropouts for whom grade was not reported. The rates jump unmistakeably once we go beyond the compulsory school attendance age, and except for the reversal of grades 12 and 11, the higher the grade the higher the loss rate.

Generalizing to the province from this sample, and using the figure of 47,762 as the estimated total within-year dropouts in 1974-75, we obtained the following:

Estimated within-school-year dropouts
by year of program

Year 1	8,024
2	12,227
3	12,657
4	9,266
5	5,588
Total	47,762
%	8.1

*Achievement**

Achievement was reported for 10,782 dropouts. This number represents 1.8 percent of the secondary school enrollment in Ontario in 1974-75, 4.3 percent of the enrollment of the participating schools and 53.8 percent of their dropouts. The percentage distribution by achievement level of the dropouts was:

As	1.7%
Bs	9.0
Cs	28.5
Ds	33.0
Fs	27.8

If we taken an average of C as indicating ability to complete any secondary school program successfully, 39.2 percent of the dropouts apparently could have graduated. Considering our sample of 20,027, this means that, whatever the reasons advanced by the students, 7841 had demonstrated the ability to succeed, 6601 were not failing but their marks offer poor prognosis for success, and 5560 were failing to achieve the minimum standard expected. Generalizing to the province from this sample, and using the figure of 47,762, we have the following:

Estimated within-year dropouts
by achievement level

A	812	
B	4,299	
C	13,612	
Sub Total		18,723
D	15,761	
F	13,278	
Total		47,762

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*Achievement levels were reported as equivalents as follows: A = 80% or above; B = 70-79%; C = 60-69%; D = 50-59%; F = under 50%.

There were 10,769 dropouts for whom we had reports of achievement level and sex. The high achievement dropouts are disproportionately female. Or to put it another way, the higher the grade the higher the proportion of dropouts of that grade level who are female. They represent 58.0 percent of the As, 53.8 percent of the Bs, 46.5 percent of the Cs, 41.1 percent of the Ds, and only 34.5 percent of the Fs. Statistically there is a highly significant relationship between the sex of the dropout and the level of achievement. To state it differently, the probability is greater than can be accounted for by chance that the female dropout is a higher achiever than the male dropout, that the higher the achievement category of the dropout the greater the disproportionate representation of the female; and also the higher the achievement grade of the dropout the greater the likelihood it will turn out to be a female.

If we take the estimated Ontario dropouts by achievement level given above, and divided them as to sex, we get the following:

	Males	Females
A	341	471
B	1986	2313
C	7282	6330
D	9283	6478
F	8697	4581

There were 10,608 students for whom we had reported both the achievement level and the year of school. There is a highly significant relationship between these variables. On the whole, the higher the grade left, the lower the probability that the dropout will be a failing student (with the exception of year-2, which has a somewhat higher proportionate representation than year-1 among the Fs). And, on the whole, the higher the grade left, the greater the probability that the dropout will be of the highest achievement level (again year-2 is the exception; it has a higher proportionate representation of As than year-5).

The peak dropout year for the As was 2, for the Bs 3, and the proportion builds up and down on each side of year-3 with the slope of the curve sharper between years 1-3. This is also true for the Cs. For the Ds, the curve slopes down more sharply after year-3.

If we take the estimated Ontario dropouts by achievement level, and divide them as to the year of school they have just quit, we get the following:

Achievement level	Year 1	2	3	4	5
A	106	208	227	165	106
B	563	1101	1199	873	563
C	1783	3485	3798	2763	1783
D	2065	4035	4397	3199	2065
F	1740	3399	3705	2695	1739

Three year comparison

Tables 11-14 record the change in the given characteristic over the three years of our dropout studies. In order to make the comparison valid we have to adjust the figures to use only the dropouts from the upper three grades. Table 11 shows the proportions by sex, table 12 by age, table 13 by year left and table 14 by achievement level.

The proportion of males was somewhat higher in 1973-74, but in 1974-75 once again was very similar to the results of the first year's survey. Representation of males among dropouts is always disproportionately high. It has been pretty well established that males drop out of secondary school more frequently than females.

The younger age groups are more heavily represented in the two later surveys (even though we have deleted the grade 9 and 10 figures). The bulk of the dropouts in all surveys were 17 or 18 years old, and the amount they represent does not change much, it is always about two-thirds (combined 62.9 percent, 63.7 percent, 63.7 percent). On the basis of this evidence we can report that the proportion of younger (16 and less) dropouts is growing, that of the older ones diminishing.

The Ontario Ministry of Education do not gather age/grade statistics, so we cannot check this conclusion by reference to the trend in age-by-grade in the province as a whole. We have, however, looked at the distribution of the whole Ontario secondary school student body, by age. The proportion of those 16 and under is inflated in these statistics by the inclusion of grades 9 and 10. So it is not the size of the percentage we must observe, but the direction of change over the three years. The figures are as follows:

Age	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75
16 and under	70.6%	71.9%	72.4%
17 and 18	26.5	25.6	25.3
19 and over	2.9	2.5	2.3

This evidence suggests that the apparent reduction in age of the dropouts is more likely to be a function of a general reduction in the proportionate size of different age groups in the secondary school enrollment than a function of changes in the dropout population itself. The increasing proportion of the enrollment in the younger age cohorts is to be expected. The peak enrollment years are just now flowing through the secondary school system, so the lower grades still have large cohorts; behind them the 'trough' is flowing. Grade 9 peaked in number in Ontario, in 1973-74.

The proportionate distribution of the senior division dropouts among grades 11, 12 and 13 has not greatly changed over these three years, but the number of grade 13 and grade 11 dropouts has somewhat increased relative to those from grade 12. Those from grade 11 represent roughly 46 percent of the whole, from grade 12, 34 percent and from grade 13, 20 percent. The percentage distribution of the upper school population of Ontario secondary schools during these years was very similar:

Grade	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75
11	45.3%	45.8%	44.8%
12	36.4	36.1	36.8
13	18.3	18.1	18.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

There does appear to be a trend to slightly increased incidence of dropout from grade 13. It should be noted that the absolute size of the grade 13 class has increased (50,712; 50,101; 51,074) so one would in any case expect a slight increase in the number of their dropouts. And since the enrollment in grade 13 will continue to grow absolutely for a few more years, we should expect the number of their dropouts also to grow. Moreover, as a group they will become more visible and appear to be more important as the total number of students in secondary school drops, so we should not be misled into exaggerating the importance of this slight trend.

The proportion of dropouts of the highest achievement level fell sharply in our second survey, and this group was lower in 1974-75 than in 1972-73. The relative size of the B group each year followed the same curve. The Cs, in terms of their relative size each year, did not greatly change, but the Ds unmistakeably grew relative to the Fs. Overall, the 'quality' of the dropout as demonstrated by our sample (in terms of average academic achievement) fell between 1972-73 and 1973-74, and by 1974-75 it had not quite recovered to its former level. This statement is based on the relative size of the two sub-totals each year. On the other hand, in the first survey, although about half the dropouts were a C average or better, 30 percent of them were failing. The relative size of the failing group has also decreased each year. Although, in the opinion of some, the difference between F and D average is slight (and we would not wish to suggest that these marks represent any absolute level of academic performance) we take the position that there is a qualitative difference between failure and non-failure and, whatever it is, on this dimension over these three years the level of the dropouts has been improving.

DROPOUTS BY FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

Sample

Information on the family characteristics of the dropouts of 1974-75, and a good deal of background information to their questionnaire responses, was obtained in telephone interviews with 423 of the respondents, each interview lasting approximately a half hour. Before discussing the interview material we shall describe the interview sample.

The 423 interviews represent over 5 percent of our questionnaire respondents. They were taken from a 3 percent random sample list drawn from the dropout lists submitted by our cooperating schools. The interviewers phoned the names as they appeared and tried a total of three times to interview each listed student before going on to the next name on the list. The student was first asked if he/she would agree to being interviewed, and then was told that he/she might refuse to answer any question. Since not all questions were answered in each interview, the total response on each item varies. The interviewer identified herself and referred to the student's dropout questionnaire, so that the respondent was made aware that we could link his/her telephone and questionnaire responses (by code), but we undertook not to identify any respondents. Only ten of the students interviewed were dropouts who had not returned questionnaires. Altogether the interview sample included 228 males and 194 females (53.9 percent to 45.9 percent). This is a somewhat lower proportion of males than among the dropouts reported.* It is also a lower ratio of males to female than we had among the respondents to the questionnaire.** It is harder to obtain telephone interviews with young males than females; they seem to be at home less often. In the interviews, therefore, it should be remembered that the female point of view (if there is a distinctive one) will be somewhat more prominent than is justified by the number of female dropouts.

There were 61 students interviewed, 14.4 percent, whose school record (forwarded by the school) did not designate age. The remainder were distributed as follows:

16 years or younger	145
17	106
18	82
19	23
20 and over	6

The comparative distribution by age of the two samples was:

Age	Interview	Questionnaire
16 or younger	40.1%	35.8%
17	29.3	29.2
18	22.6	23.5
19	6.3	8.3
20 and over	1.7	3.2
Total	100.0	100.0

The interview sample is somewhat younger than the questionnaire sample.

There were 184 students interviewed for whom the program designation was not reported. They represent 43.5 percent of this sample. A program designation was not reported for 55.7 percent of the questionnaire sample. In the two samples the dropouts for whom we have a program designation were distributed as follows:

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*the ones for whom we know sex, 58.1:41.9

**the ones for whom we know sex, 56.4:43.6

Program	Interview	Questionnaire
2-year	4.4%	8.1%
4-year	54.9	44.2
5-year	17.4	23.1
General	5.8	7.9
Advanced	4.5	4.0
Special/occupational	9.4	8.2
Mature student/part-time/adult	3.6	0.2
Other	—	4.3
Total	100.0	100.0

There is a greater representation among the questionnaire respondents of students from the 5-year program and 2-year program, and among the interview respondents an over-representation of those from the 4-year program. Since program labels are no longer officially used in Ontario, enrollment figures by program are not available. Therefore we cannot tell whether the questionnaire distribution or the interview distribution is closer to the actual state for 1974-75. It is likely that the 4-year program position — if such a position is revealed by the interviews — cannot be attributed to the larger group of questionnaire respondents.

For 54 of the interviewed students we do not know the year of school left. The remainder were distributed as follows:

Year 1 (grade 9)	54
Year 2	98
Year 3	117
Year 4	53
Year 5	47

Comparing the two samples by grade we find:

Year	Interview	Questionnaire
1	14.6%	16.8%
2	26.6	25.6
3	31.7	26.5
4	14.4	19.4
5	12.7	11.7
Total	100.0	100.0

The interview sample had higher representation in grade 11, and slightly higher in 10 and 13, and a compensating lower representation in grades 9 and 12.

There were 126 interviewed dropouts for whom we lack an average mark. The rest were distributed by achievement level as follows (the questionnaire distributions are given on the right for comparison):

Achievement level	Interview No.	Interview %	Questionnaire %
A	3	1.0	1.7
B	20	6.7	9.0
C	86	28.9	28.5
D	106	35.8	33.0
F	82	27.6	27.8
Total	297	100.0	100.0

Among the interviewed students there are proportionately fewer As and Bs, and more Ds.

Family

Most of the interviewed students had both parents alive (88.7 percent); for 13 the mother was dead (3.1 percent); for 18 the father was dead (4.3 percent). We interviewed no students who were full orphans. Seventeen dropouts did not answer this question.

The bulk of these students live at home with their parents (71.4 percent). There were 36 who lived with their mothers only (8.5 percent), 10 who lived with their fathers only (2.4 percent), and 58 who did not live at home. Seventeen students did not answer this question.

Almost three quarters of these dropouts have Canadian born fathers (71.6 percent). There were 101 students (23.9 percent) whose fathers had been born elsewhere, and 19 did not answer the question. According to the census of 1971 the reference group of Ontario males, age 45-64, was 68.8 percent Canadian born. The percentage distribution of foreign born fathers by country of origin is shown below. The figures on the right are a percentage distribution of foreign born Ontario adult males by country of origin, as shown in the 1971 census. Unfortunately the government of Canada has changed its census categories so that it is impossible to obtain specific designations of country of origin. The best comparison we can make is with 'other European' as a whole.

Country of origin (if not Canada)	Interviewed dropouts' fathers No.	%		1971 census Males in Ontario age 45-64 %
United States	6	6.1		4.9
Great Britain	20	20.2		31.7 (U.K.)
Ireland	4	4.0		
France	0	0.0		
Germany	9	9.1	62.6	59.3
Italy	13	13.1		
Other European	38	36.4		
Other	11	11.1		4.1
Total	101	100.0		100.0

An even higher proportion of their mothers were Canadian born (72.6 percent). There were 98 whose mothers had been born abroad, and 17 students did not answer the question. The foreign born mothers came from the following countries (again the 1971 census distribution of adult females is shown for comparison). The reference group of Ontario females, age 45-64, census of 1971, is 70.8% Canadian born.

Country of origin (if not Canada)	Interviewed dropouts' mothers No.	%		1971 census Females in Ontario age 45-64 %
United States	8	8.1		6.9
Great Britain	27	27.3		35.8 (U.K.)
Ireland	3	3.0	54.5	52.6
France	2	2.0		
Germany	10	10.1		
Italy	12	12.1		
Other European	28	27.3		
Other	10	10.1		4.7
Total	100	100.0		100.0

The most common language spoken in the homes of these dropouts was English. All the interviews were conducted in English. Only one of the interviewers could speak fairly fluent French, so interviewers were instructed to address the student in English, whatever the language suggested by the surname, and arrange for another interviewer to call again if it was quite impossible to obtain replies to the questions. We met no completely non-English speaking students, although the interviewers did have some difficulty understanding one or two dropouts who were recent Chinese immigrants.

From the interviews we obtained the following picture of the 'typical' Ontario dropout. He speaks English at home (sometimes in addition to another language); both his parents are Canadian born; his parents are still alive and he lives at home with them (if he lives with only one parent it is likely to be his mother). Where the dropout does not live at home; he lives on his own (i.e., not with a relative), but these are a small minority of the total. Among the minority whose parents are not Canadian born, the parents, to a larger extent than would generally be the case in Ontario, come from foreign countries other than Britain or the U.S. If the father was born abroad about six percent came from the U.S., and 11 percent from non-European countries. If the mother was born abroad about eight percent came from the U.S. and 10 percent came from non-European countries. This is an under-representation of Americans and a gross over-representation of foreigners of non-European origin, more than twice the level to be expected. If we combine all Europeans (including the British and Irish) they represent 82.8 percent of the total foreign born fathers and 81.8 percent of the foreign-born mothers. There were no indigenous Canadians (Indian or Eskimo) among our interview sample.

Father's educational and occupational level

We provided for coding thirteen levels of formal education. For about one quarter of the fathers we were unable to get information. The student either did not know the highest grade of formal education completed, or did not wish to report it. In many cases the student left the phone to confer with his parents (on this and other family questions), and then returned to describe their replies, working out equivalences with the interviewer.

The distribution of the fathers' educational backgrounds (excluding the 103 for whom we have no information) is given below. The figures on the right are the 1971 census percentage distribution of Ontario adult males aged 40-65, by highest completed level of formal study.

Highest completed formal study (or equivalent)	Interview dropouts' fathers			1971 census Males in Ontario aged 40-65
	No.	%		%
No formal schooling	4	1.3	42.3	41.9
1-3	8	2.5		
4-6	31	9.7		
7,8	92	28.8		
9	34	10.6	22.5	20.7
10	38	11.9		
11	32	10.2		7.8
12	38	11.9	15.6	18.2
13	12	3.7		
Post-sec. non-univ.	2	0.6	3.4	4.8
1, 2 yrs. univ	9	2.8		
3, 4 yrs. univ.	17	5.3	6.2	6.6 (university degree)
Univ. prof. or grad. school	3	0.9		
Total	320	100.0		100.0

Comparing our dropouts' fathers with the Ontario male population of comparable age we see that dropouts' fathers are more polarized by educational level. There is over-representation in the very low and low (42.3 percent *v.* 41.9 percent; 22.5 percent *v.* 20.7 percent; 10.2 percent *v.* 7.8 percent). They are somewhat under-represented at the middle educational levels, those with grades 12 and 13 or some university or post secondary are fewer than might be expected. Those with university degrees are about the same proportion as the referent population.

Most of the interviewed students reported that their fathers were known to be gainfully employed, i.e., 328, 77.5 percent were working. Forty-eight of the students either would not, or could not, answer the question. Some who lived with their mothers only did not know whether their fathers were employed or not. We had answers such as, "I have not seen him for — years". Some of the 48 reported that their fathers were dead. Forty-seven students (11.1 percent) had fathers who were definitely not working.

Among the 47 non-working fathers we were given information about the current activities of 45:

20 (44.5%) on pension
4 (8.8%) unemployed and looking for work
1 (2.2%) unemployed but not looking for work
5 (11.1%) drawing unemployment insurance
1 (2.2%) on welfare
7 (15.6%) incapacitated* and
7 (15.6%) in other conditions which were specified

If we combine the three unemployed groups we have 22.1 percent of the non-working fathers, 2.4 percent of the interview sample, 2.7 percent of that portion of the sample for which we have information on fathers' employment. In 1974-75 the registered unemployed males in Ontario represented 4 percent of the labour force (i.e., employable males aged 15-65). The percentage aged 45-60 was much lower (0.8 percent) of course because youth unemployment rates are higher than those of middle aged males. So it must be concluded that the dropouts do come disproportionately from families whose fathers are unemployed. However, the unemployed fathers still represent a very small proportion of our sample (2.4-2.7 percent).

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*Hence presumably drawing some sort of private (i.e. from insurance) or public disability payment.

We coded fathers' occupations (as described by their children) by the Census of Canada occupational categories, fitting the verbal description into occupational titles as closely as the description would permit. It will be understood that a certain amount of judgement has to be exercised by the coder in this work. The descriptions were coded by a student research assistant and then checked for consistency by the senior research assistant.

There were 89 students unwilling or unable to describe their fathers' work sufficiently to enable it to be coded. Apart from these non-responses, the distribution by level of fathers' occupation is shown below. On the right is the distribution of Ontario adult employed males as shown in the 1971 census:

	Fathers		1971 census Ontario labour force Males 45-64
Occupational level	No.	%	%
Managerial, professional and technical	84	25.1	16.0
Clerical	3	0.9	8.2
Sales	21	6.3	10.2
Service and recreation	33	9.9	10.3
Transport and communication	31	9.3	8.0
Craftsmen, factory and production process workers	123	36.8	32.1
Primary and other occupations	24	7.2	6.9
Occupation not stated	15	4.5	8.3
Total	334	100.0	100.0

On the basis of fathers' schooling we would classify these students' families into the common 5-strata socio-economic classification as follows:

Upper Upper middle	2.8 + 5.3 + 0.9 = 9.0% (some university, university first or higher degrees)
Lower middle	10.2 + 11.9 + 3.7 + 0.6 = 26.4% (upper secondary, non-univ. post-sec.)
Upper lower	28.8 + 10.6 + 11.9 = 51.3% (grade 7-10 inclusive or equivalent)
Lower lower	1.3 + 2.5 + 9.7 = 13.5% (grade 6 equivalent or less)

On this basis slightly more than half the dropouts might be said to come from the skilled working class, about a quarter from the white-collar class, about 14 percent from the unskilled working class, and nine percent from professional and managerial groups.

On the basis of the fathers' occupations (omitting those not gainfully employed) we would classify them as follows:

Upper Upper middle *	25.1%
Lower middle	0.9 + 6.3 + 9.9 = 17.1%
Upper lower	9.3 + 36.8 = 46.1%
Lower lower	7.2 + 4.5 = 11.7%

Judged by type of employment rather than education there has been a movement upward in the sample. The top group (professional and technical) represents a quarter of it rather than one tenth; the second group (clerical or white collar) has been reduced to 17.1 percent from 26.4 percent; the third (skilled worker) reduced to 46.1 percent from 51.3 percent; the lowest (unskilled labourers and primary workers) from 13.5 percent to 11.7 percent.

If we add the non-employed to those whose occupations were reported we shift this distribution somewhat. We did this in the following manner — the 20 on pension we divided equally among the four strata: the 15 on welfare, incapacitated or 'other' we added to the lowest stratum: the 10 unemployed we added to the three lowest strata (as 3.43). This provided an estimated distribution of 23.5 percent *v.* 25.1; 17.1 percent unchanged; 43.0 percent *v.* 46.1 percent; and 16.4 percent *v.* 11.7 percent.

We think the categorization by employment is probably a more accurate reflection of lifestyle. In a province like Ontario many members of the middle-aged male labour force (because of our recent economic growth and the immigration of workers from countries of generally lower educational levels) are employed in occupations beyond their formal education. There has been much informal learning on the job. For their children in the coming decades this situation may well be reversed and, because of the expansion of public education, we may see large numbers of workers under-employed for their formal educational levels (in which case education may well become the more accurate indicator of lifestyle). It should be noted that not all the 'lower lower', as we have defined them (using these indicators: fathers with six years or less of school or employed as labourers or workers in primary industries), are families which could be classed as 'the poor'. For many a more accurate popular label would be 'the respectable working class'. 'The poor' are likely to be found among the single-parent families and the families of the non-working fathers (except, perhaps, those on pension, and some who were between jobs and drawing unemployment insurance).

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*The distribution between upper middle and upper class is not primarily a function of education but rather of wealth (particularly capital), so these have been combined.

Another indicator of socio-economic status is family income, which was reported by the interviewed students. It must be conceded that this was included without much confidence that useful information would be reported. It is difficult to judge how accurate these data are. The interviewer was instructed to explain that we were not interested in the father's or mother's precise salary, but were trying to obtain a general impression of the income group of the family as a whole. The student was asked to try to visualize the sum of the net salaries going into the home — i.e., if he, his father and mother were all working, how much did their combined (after tax) income amount to per week, month or year. Then the student was asked whether he was more 'comfortable' thinking of family income in terms of weekly, monthly or yearly sums. Since different occupational levels traditionally have their salaries expressed in different terms, and paid in different ways,* we thought the response itself would be of interest (regardless of how accurate the actual sums quoted might be). The interviewers were struck by the generally careful character of the response. Most students took our question as a serious and important one, discussing its basis with the interviewer. Some did not attempt to answer. There were few facetious or frivolous replies.

There were 170 students who could not, or would not, report their families' incomes. The distribution of the 253 who provided information is given on the next page.

It is clear that these dropouts come from lower income families than Ontario familes in general, although relatively few represent the very poor (under $6000 per annum). In 1974, 65.2 percent of Ontario families had incomes in excess of $12,000 per annum, and the median income was $14,792. Only about a third (36.8 percent) of our interviewed dropouts came from families in this income category.

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*Unskilled and skilled blue-collar work is usually quoted as an hourly rate and computed on a weekly basis. White-collar workers of the clerical level are paid on a weekly or bi-weekly basis and seldom quote their rate by the hour. Some white-collar workers (technical and sales personnel) quote monthly rates adding commission or overtime. Professional workers, particularly those employed in the public sector, quote annual salaries.

1974 family income (in dollars)	Interviews			Ontario families 1974*
	No.	%		%
1. Under $125 per week or under $500 per month or under $6000 per year.	22	8.7		10.7
2. $125-150 per week or $500-600 per month or $6000-7200 per year.	31	12.2	54.5	24.1
3. $150-175 per week, or $600-700 per month or $7200-8400 per year	20	7.9		
4. $175-200 per week or $700-800 per month or $8400-9600 per year	26	10.3		
5. $200-225 per week or $800-900 per month or $9600-10,800 per year	25	9.9		
6. $225-250 per week or $900-1000 per month or $10,800-12,000 per year	36	14.2		
7. Above these figures	93	36.8		65.2
Total	253	100.0		100.0

*_Ontario Statistics 1975._ Volume 2 Economic Series. Ministry of Treasury, Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs. Ontario: 1975, updated with unpublished statistics.

Before we leave the discussion of the dropout families' socio-economic status we should add information on the students' mothers (although family status traditionally has been more influenced by the father's than the mother's characteristics). We asked the same questions about mothers as about fathers.

Mothers educational and occupational level

There are 101 cases where the mothers' schooling was not described. The distribution of the rest is shown below together with the 1971 census distribution of adult females in Ontario.

Highest completed formal study (or equivalent)	Interview dropouts' mothers No.	Interview dropouts' mothers %		1971 census Females in Ontario aged 40-65 %
No formal schooling	1	0.3	27.9	33.3
1-3	2	0.6		
4-6	27	8.4		
7-8	60	18.6		
9	36	11.2	30.8	22.2
10	63	19.6		
11	27	8.4		10.5
12	69	21.5	26.4	26.1
13	16	4.9		
Post-sec. non-univ.	6	1.9	3.1	4.6
1, 2 yrs. univ.	4	1.2		
3, 4 yrs. univ.	9	2.8	3.4	3.2 (university degree)
Univ. prof. or grad. school	2	0.6		
Total	322	100.0		100.0

Until we reach about mid high school level the dropouts' mothers are more highly educated than the fathers (i.e., there are smaller percentages in the low schooling categories up to the grade 9 level, and then larger ones from grade 9 to post secondary inclusive — except for grade 11 where the proportions are very similar). However, for the three higher education categories (some university, 1 or 2 years, 3 or 4, i.e., first degree, graduate and post graduate or professional study), the fathers' participation proportions exceed the mothers'. The mothers of dropouts, as compared to female adults of similar age, in Ontario, are under-represented in the very low group. This is more than made up by their over-representation in the next higher group. In general, very slightly more mothers of dropouts have less than an upper secondary school education (below grades 12 or 13) than the Ontario female adult population of comparable age, about an equal percentage have a grade 12 or 13 education, and fewer have had some post-secondary education.

There were 195 (46.1 percent) interviewed students whose mothers were gainfully employed, 189 were not employed at that time, and 39 students did not answer the question.

Of the 189 not employed 50 had never worked for wages, and for 29 no description or status of former work was given. The current activities reported were as follows:

115 (71.9%) staying at home looking after household
5 (3.1%) on pension
6 (3.7%) unemployed and looking for work
7 (4.4%) drawing unemployment insurance
3 (1.9%) on welfare
5 (3.1%) incapacitated
10 (11.9%) other

The occupational level of the employed mothers, for whom a sufficient job description was given to permit coding, was as follows:

Occupational level	Mothers No.	Mothers %	1971 census Ontario labour force Females 45-64 %
Managerial, professional and technical	32	16.6	15.8
Clerical	46	23.8	30.2
Sales	29	15.0	11.7
Service and recreation	47	24.5	17.5
Transport and communication	4	2.0	2.1
Craftsmen, factory and production process workers	27	14.0	9.3
Primary and other occupations	6	3.1	3.7
Occupations not stated	2	1.0	9.7
Total	193	100.0	100.0

The dropouts' mothers' occupations cluster in the middle range.

White collar clerical, sales and service categories account for almost two thirds (63.3 percent) as compared with only 17.1 percent of the fathers. For both the sample mothers and the Ontario female labour force, over three quarters are employed in professional and white collar occupations. However, a higher share of the sample mothers are in the service and sales categories than is generally the case.

Siblings

The final group of questions on family background dealt with the dropouts' brothers and sisters.

Over 91 percent of the interviewed students had at least one brother or sister. Of the remainder, 15 were 'only' children, and 19 did not answer the question. The number of siblings was distributed as follows:

	Interviews		No. living at home	
No. of siblings	No.	%	No.	%
None or no response	34	8.0	87	20.6
1	58	13.7	106	25.1
2	84	19.9	91	21.5
3	92	21.7	65	15.4
4	46	10.9	34	8.0
5	48	11.3	21	5.0
6	18	4.3	10	2.4
7	14	3.3	4	0.9
8	8	1.9	2	0.5
9 or more	21	5.0	3	0.7
Total	423	100.0	423	100.0

The estimated average family size of the dropouts represented in this sample was 4.3 children.* The average family size in Ontario reported in the 1971 census was 3.6. Therefore we conclude that dropouts come from larger families than are common in the population of the province.

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*Total number of children calculated by multiplying 34 by one, 58 by two, 84 by three etc. For familes with '9 or more' siblings we used the figure ten. This will, of course, under-estimate the total. Then the total number of children (1808) was divided by the number of families represented (423).

The most common ordinal position for the interviewed student was 'middle' child (191, 45.2 percent); 37 did not answer this question or were 'only' children; 85 (20.1 percent) were the eldest in the family; 110 were the youngest (26.0 percent). This does not bear out the contention that the dropout tends to be the eldest child of the family, taken from school to help the parents care for younger children.

The students were asked how many of their brothers or sisters lived at home; their answers showed a sizeable number. This may be seen by comparing the first and third columns on page 56. For example, there were 46 dropouts with 4 brothers and/or sisters and 34 of them had four siblings living at home. We asked this question in order to try to relate family income to the number of children living at home (although that number does not necessarily represent the number of dependent children).

We cross-classified the number of children at home by family income. From these data we noted that the very large families are in the two highest income categories which we specified (i.e., above $10,800 per annum), but some families of five and six children are in the lowest groups. Eight of the 19 families living on less than $6000 per annum had three or more children; seven of the 22 whose income was $6000-$7200; four of the fourteen in the next income level; 11 of the 24 at the $8400-$9600 (i.e., almost half); seven of 24 at the next income level; twelve of 28 at $10,800-$12,000; and 33 of 75 at the over $12,000 income level. If we combine families into small (two children) and large (three or more) we get the following percentage distribution:

Income category	1*	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Small families	8.9	12.1	8.0	10.5	13.7	12.9	33.9	100.0
Large families	9.8	8.5	4.9	13.4	8.6	14.6	40.2	100.0
Total sub-sample	9.2	10.7	6.8	11.7	11.7	13.6	36.4	100.0

N = 206

*See page 53.

Large families are over-represented at the ends of the income scale (i.e., among the poorest and the most affluent).

The final question asked was whether any of the students' brothers or sisters had dropped out of secondary school. From the wording of the question 'drop out' was taken to mean that they had not completed their program or graduated with some sort of diploma or certificate, i.e., it includes the dropouts as we have defined them and the no-shows.

Almost half the students interviewed had one or more brothers or sisters who had already dropped out of school (194, 47.5 percent). Thirty-six did not answer the question (or had no brothers or sisters), and in 175 cases the interviewed student was the first member of his family to drop out. (It should be remembered that 83 of these students are the eldest children in their families so, by virtue of that, they would be most likely the first to drop out.)

3

Why did they leave?

The 1974-75 questionnaire provided categories of reasons and a space where the student could write in any reason(s) not covered in the list — although not much space was provided, so the description had to be brief. Some 1193 'open ended' reasons were given altogether, designated as first, second, third or fourth reasons, and some 70 letters were received explaining the circumstances even more fully. In the interviews, held between four and twelve months* after he had dropped out, the student was asked to review the circumstances more fully. Also at the end of the interview an unstructured 'fishing' question was given soliciting suggestions for improving the school experience. There was a relationship between many of the suggestions offered and one or more of the reasons why the student had left.

The questionnaire gave the student the opportunity to choose four reasons and rank them in order of importance. From a review of the reasons written on the questionnaire, the letters from students and their parents, and the responses during the interviews, it is clear that most of the additional reasons could be fitted into the categories provided — they express the same thing but in different words.

The value of the open ended questions, letters, etc., is in providing details of the circumstances. Each person is very aware of the unique features of his own case; he does not always realize that his is one of many variations on a theme. So, in our experience, the interviews add a human dimension to the study but, except where they add new questions (e.g., the details of the job, the job hunting experience, the salary, the number of job changes), they do not significantly change the picture obtained by the statistical findings of the questionnaire survey.

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*The interviews were done in three batches. A sample of interviews from the 1973-74 questionnaire respondents was held in spring 1975 (about a year after they had dropped out); the first sample from the 1974-75 dropouts was interviewed between April and August 1975 (about 4-8 months after they had dropped out); the second 1974-75 batch was interviewed in fall 1975 (from 6-12 months after they had dropped out).

Since the credibility of this part of the report, and the others which follow, rests primarily on the questionnaire findings it is appropriate now to review its response rates to demonstrate that it is a reliable basis of 'facts'.

Questionnaire response

There were 248,112 students enrolled in our participating schools in September 1974; 20,027 of them were reported as having dropped out. The reports for all but one system's schools originated with the school secretary, so any mistake as to the movement (i.e., that it was a transfer rather than a dropout) was picked up immediately — even before the lists and questionnaires were sent to the board office to be forwarded, with the others from that system, to OISE. The report of the dropouts from the other system was a computer printed list for each school showing all movement during the month in question. Throughout the year there were a few cases of wrong categorization, which regrettably caused some complaint to the school principals. Considering the number of students in the system involved, the number of errors discovered was remarkably few, and we would like to record our admiration for the accuracy of the computerized record keeping system. We would also like to express our appreciation of the school principals who, with humour and tact, dealt with the few irate students or parents. In most of the cases where a student was sent a questionnaire as a dropout or a re-entrant, and proved not to be, he was a transfer — sometimes to another system, sometimes to a private school. Either the receiving school had not (yet?) requested the student's record or the student did not wish the record to be transferred and had not informed the school authorities of his destination. The other cases were probably coding errors, the student was coded as a dropout loss when he should have been coded in some other category.

In summer and early fall 1975, when we used these lists for the re-entry study, we also had a number of phone calls and letters protesting that the student in question had neither dropped out nor re-entered. We discovered that the procedure for registration of technical students taking a summer school course, followed immediately by fall registration in a regular course, caused some students to be erroneously listed as re-entrants (although they were never dropouts). Once these names were drawn to our attention they were all deleted from our list. And students who phoned us were asked to return their questionnaires marked "Not a re-entrant" to ensure that no deletion would pass undetected.

The 20,027 dropouts represent a dropout rate of 8.1 percent. From this 'pool' 8141 returned our questionnaire, a response rate of 40.6 percent. In all the systems where the schools administered the survey, instructions were given for a follow up of the questionnaire about a week after it had been mailed. Duplicate questionnaires were supplied, and the follow up was by telephone. Usually the call was made by the school secretary or a member of the guidance department. It is no mean task to follow up the dropouts of a large secondary school. Even preparing the lists and mailing the questionnaires each month was a task which the officials of one board were reluctant to impose on their school personnel. Nor could OISE staff undertake any follow up. So, for those dropouts, we had to be content merely with mailing the questionnaires at the end of each term. The lower response rates from these schools are unfortunate but were not unexpected. Their students represent a considerable proportion of the entire Ontario secondary school population and it was expected that their dropout rate would be high. So their absolute number, even with a small percentage response, is large. However, their inclusion reduced our overall response rate. Without them the rate was 49.5 percent (7504 questionnaires returned). Their questionnaire response rate was 13.1 percent, and their dropout rate 14.1 percent (which gives 4861 dropouts in 1974-75 and 637 questionnaires returned). In meeting this system's condition for participation we agreed not only to the likelihood of a lower overall response rate, but also that some of the analysis would have to exclude their dropouts because their computer sheets did not provide all the identity information we collected from the other systems.

In summary: There were 8141 questionnaires returned. This represents an overall response rate of 40.6 percent; a rate of 49.5 percent for all but one board. However, it is not our intention to discuss specific boards. The purpose of the study was to consider the dropout condition in Ontario as a whole. In the analysis we shall make it clear when we are discussing the 7504 dropouts who represent replies from the pool of 15,166, and when we are discussing the 8141 who represent the pool of 20,027.

Questionnaire response rates by region

As we explained in Chapter 1 the number of dropouts varies greatly from one part of Ontario to another. It was to be expected, therefore, that the rates of their response to our questionnaire would vary no less. The areas where it was difficult to obtain board participation are also the areas where the response to the questionnaire was poor — so in an absolute sense they have provided few dropout replies (opinions, plans, etc.).

The problems of follow-up vary with local conditions. In some systems size presents a difficulty. There are so many dropouts from a large school, and the task of administering the questionnarie is so burdensome, there is little time for follow-up. In a large city youth frequently live away from their parents' home. They also move their residence frequently. In the smaller cities and towns of southern Ontario follow-up is easiest; their youth population seems more stable. In the north, once the youth have left school they leave town to look for work. This is true except for one or two large cities. So the response reported here represents a tremendous effort of school personnel and its achievement should not be underestimated. We have already referred to the low participation in the northwestern, eastern and Ottawa Valley regions. In the first and third the response rate was poor too. In the eastern region the response rate of the one participating board was high, but insufficient to offset the low representation generally. However, since we are not particularly concerned with the Ministry of Education's regions *per se* it is gratifying to note that the response by broad general geographical area, the west, north, east and central, is more acceptable (see table 15).

Questionnaire response by participating board

The rate of questionnaire responses by board varied from 13.1 percent to 86.3 percent (see table 16). In absolute terms the numbers of respondents in the different boards would vary greatly, in any case, because of the differences in enrollment and rates of dropping out. When one combines variation in size of enrollment and variation in response rate one would expect to have widely differing absolute figures. The smallest number of dropouts from any participating board was 38. The fewest questionnaire responses (not from that board) was 23. The largest number of dropouts from a single board was 4861; the largest number of questionnaires (from the same board) was 637.

The very small boards (2500 enrollment or less) are under-represented (see table 17). We have a number of them in our sample, of course, but there are still many very small boards in Ontario, in the north. Such boards represent 11.6 percent of our sample. Their response rates were not high. Their questionnaires represent only 1.2 percent of the total number recived. The small boards having enrollments of between 2501-5000 pupils represent about 19 percent of the sample. Although their response rates were high, their actual total enrollment and their dropout rates were such that their questionnaires represent only 11 percent of the total. The picture is similar for the moderate sized boards (5001-10,000 enrollment). Although they were almost 27 percent of the sample, they yielded only about 22 percent of the questionnaries. The large boards were *by design* well represented in the sample because all indications were that the high dropout rates would be found in these boards, particularly the very large schools of large cities. So in our questionnaire response there is over-representation of boards in the 10,000-20,000 enrollment range. They formed 34.6 percent of the sample, they yielded a large number of dropouts, and the study was very efficiently carried out by their schools, so that they had uniformly high response rates. Therefore, although boards of this size formed less than 35 percent of the sample, their questionnaires represent almost 54 percent of the total. The very large city boards (over 20,000 enrollment) were about eight percent of our sample, something of an under-representation. There are six Ontario boards which have a secondary school enrollment exceeding 20,000. We had two in our sample. Although they represent about eight percent of the sample, such is their combined enrollment and yield of dropouts that, although their combined response rate was not high (only 15 percent), they form 11.5 percent of our questionnaire sample.

Considering our sample of questionnaires, therefore, it should be borne in mind that the 'position' of the dropout from the very small school system probably is under-represented; not quite as much weight is given to the position of the dropout from the small (2501-5000) system as we should have liked, but their under-representation is not severe; there is also some under-representation of the very large system; and that the respondents from the large county boards are over-represented, so that their position will influence the total opinions, plans, reasons for leaving school, etc., rather more than is warranted. All in all we would claim that the only serious lack from a provincial point of view is the thin representation of dropouts from the extremely small boards.

Questionnaire response by sex

We know the sex of 8042 of the 8141 students who returned questionnaires; 4536 (56.4 percent) were males and 3506 (43.6 percent) females. The respondents represent 39.5 percent of the male dropouts and 42.3 percent of the females. The female dropout rate was lower (6.9 percent, 8287 out of a female enrollment of 119,469) than the male rate (8.9 percent, 11,476 male dropouts out of an enrollment of 128,645). There is statistically a highly significant relationship between the sex of the dropout and whether he/she returned a questionnaire. A significantly higher proportion of females responded. This is consistently so, whether we are dealing with the total sample or with that portion for which we have detailed identity information. Therefore, it should be kept in mind when we are discussing reasons for leaving school, current activities, plans, etc. that the girls' reports will have a higher representation than their number among the dropouts warrants. The higher female than male response rates were maintained in all geographical regions and areas (except northwestern) regardless of whether the overall response rate was high or low.

Questionnaire response by year (or grade) left

We have a total of 7760 respondents for whom we know the year of school that they left. They tend to be distributed more or less proportionately as they appear in the dropout sample by grade. There is a statistically significant relationship of these variables to one another in the sample as a whole, but it is caused by the distributions of the very large urban systems. If they are deleted there is no statistical significance between the grade the student left and whether he replied to our questionnaire or not.

Questionnaire response by achievement level

There were 5801 questionnaires from students for whom an average mark was reported. The relationship of marks to response is statistically significant. The A and F level students are under-represented among the respondents; the Cs are over-represented. In other words the average student was more inclined to answer our questionnaire than those at the extremes of the achievement continuum. Neither the very bright dropouts nor the failures replied in the numbers expected, so their opinions, reasons for leaving school etc. are not sufficiently stressed and insofar as they differ from the broad average will be somewhat under-represented.

In summary: As we discuss the students' reasons for leaving school, activities, plans, complaints, etc., the reader should keep in mind certain biases of response which, though not serious, will tend to over-represent certain groups.

- There is a higher proportion of female respondents than male (so the female viewpoint, if there is one, will appear to be more prevalent than it actually is). Since there are more male dropouts than female ones this bias will tend to minimize the differences between the sexes.
- There are fewer responses from A and F level students than one would expect. Since there are few A level dropouts, in any case, this will have the effect of understating their case. The understatement will be less apparent for the Fs.
- In the study there was an overall under-representation of the enrollment of three of the Ministry's regions — northwestern, eastern and Ottawa Valley. The high response rate of the participating board in the eastern region is not sufficient to overcome the weakness. The low response rates of the other two regions merely exacerbate the condition. However if we settle for broad geographic representation (north, west, east, central Ontario) the participation picture improves, although the poor representation in eastern Ontario persists.
- The response rates of the schools in the large cities are low. This was inevitable because of the lack of follow-up. Because the study included two of the large boards of the central region the response rate for the region was acceptable.

It should be kept in mind that, from here on, we are reporting the opinions and statements of the dropout students rather than records and statistical facts. Each student response expresses only one viewpoint, one perception of the situation. When the student declares he left school primarily because he was "failing anyway" we can check this claim against the average mark submitted by his school (if an average mark was submitted), but when he declares he left school primarily because of his relationship with some teacher or teachers, or he criticizes a course or program, we have no objective data by which we may judge his statement. There are no other opinions given. Similarly, when the student reports that his parents approved the decision to drop out of school we have no parental counterclaim which might upset his declaration. In the discussion we have tried to assess responses for internal consistency. In the interviews we tried to probe below the surface of the students' claims, to find out the basis for the statements.

WHY DID THESE YOUTH DROP OUT OF SCHOOL?

First reason

The most common reason given on the 1974-75 questionnaire was that the student left school to take a job (see figure 11). This holds true as the first reason given, no matter what the base of analysis. Of the 8141 respondents to the survey, 71 did not answer the question. The distribution of the 8070 others by rank order of frequency was as follows:

2261	(27.9%)	left school to take a job
930	(11.5%)	left school because they needed money and had the chance of a job
830	(10.3%)	just hated school and felt they could stand it no longer
819	(10.1%)	had a variety of other reasons*
789	(9.8%)	were failing anyway and felt they might just as well leave
772	(9.6%)	left for personal reasons, other than financial ones
366	(4.5%)	left because of medical reasons
369	(4.6%)	had some dissatisfaction with a teacher(s), or the teaching in the school
345	(4.3%)	were dissatisfied with their courses or program of study
288	(3.6%)	had no particular reason, they just 'drifted out'
208	(2.6%)	left to get married
93	(1.2%)	left to travel

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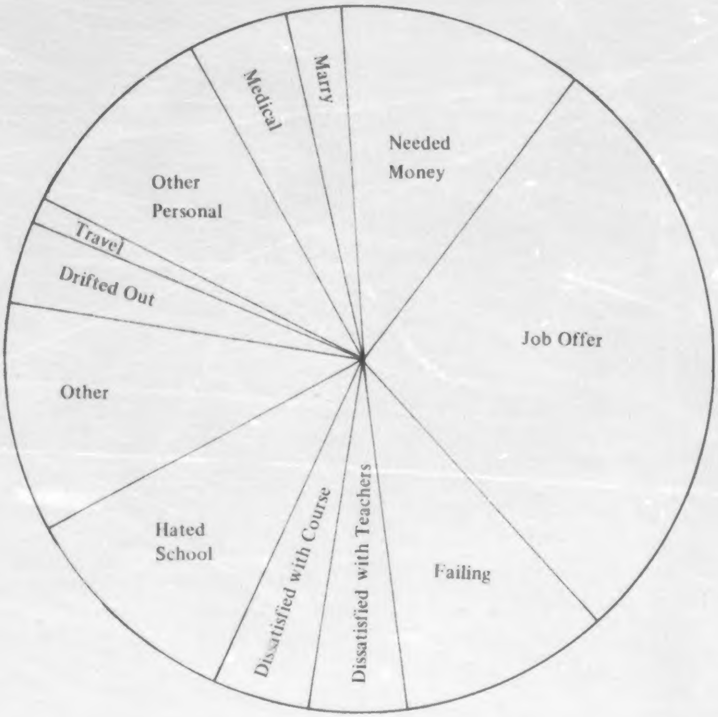
*The 'other' category is omitted from the discussion which follows. These students are described in a separate section in this chapter.

Figure 11 DROPOUTS–PRINCIPAL REASON FOR LEAVING SCHOOL, 1974-75



The rank order of importance of these reasons has not greatly changed over the three years in which we have been questioning dropouts. In the two most recent studies the most common reason for leaving school was to take a job, and this was a very close second in the 1972-73 survey. In that pilot study the total number of times a reason was mentioned is used to determine the rank order, because students were not asked to indicate which was their first, second or third reason.

When we put together the job reasons and the financial reasons (either personal or family need — after the first survey we did not differentiate) the economic motiviation for leaving school is unmistakeably paramount (see table 18). But that does not mean that these students *had* to leave school because of financial need. That question is discussed later. The student may have taken a job because he considered it represented a good oppotrunity, even though neither he nor his family was in need of the money. Similarly, he may have left because he perceived a need for money which any objective assessment of his or his family's financial situation would not judge to represent need. Towards the end of this chapter we try to judge from the interview data what motivated the taking of a job, in how many cases this may be held to represent need, and what evidence there is to account for the student's perception that he needed money and hence should leave school.

"Hated school" was the most frequently given reason for leaving school cited in the 1972-73 survey, but in 1973-74 and 1974-75 it was third, behind the economic motivations. It is, nevertheless, decidedly the top non-economic reason given. "Failing anyway" ranked fourth in the first and third surveys, and second in 1973-74. Personal reasons other than financial ranked next, with criticism of teachers virtually as frequent. After the first survey, dissatisfactions with teachers or courses were differentiated from "other" (because of the number of times they had been written on the questionnaire). "Health" and "to get married" were specified for the same reason. They do not loom large in the total number of reasons and they are not high on the order list, but they appear persistently. Health includes the few reported cases of drug taking. Viewed statistically drug taking is not a problem which causes students to drop out of secondary school. If it is a common problem it is not one the students are prepared to admit to. We cannot measure what is not said, only what is said. In each survey a few students admitted that they had had a drug problem which finally ended their school careers. We also received a few letters from parents reporting that this had been their children's real problem. Such letters have also to be placed in perspective. We received a number of parental letters sounding off about some other aspect of school or society. For example, some mothers disliked our addressing the female dropouts as 'Ms,' and wrote or phoned to protest about the unfortunate effect of the influence of 'women's lib' on teenage girls. We explained that during the first survey (in which all females had been addressed as Miss) some respondents had pointed out that they were now married and that Miss was no longer an appropriate title. The use of Ms seemed to solve that difficulty.

After we report the rank ordering of reasons by sex, age, grade left, and achievement level we shall divide the reasons into three broad groups for detailed analysis — the economic related ones ("job", "needed money"), the personal ("to get married", "medical/health", "other personal", "travel") and the school-related ("failing", criticism of teachers, criticism of courses, "hated school", "drifted out").

The easiest way to see how the rank ordering of the first reasons by sex, etc. have changed over the three years is by tables (like those at the end of the book, numbered 19-22) which put the ordinal numbers of different years side by side.

The top reason for leaving, given by males, has not changed. It has been 'to take a job' in all three surveys, closely followed by "needed money". In the 1972-73 survey "hated school" loomed larger than it does later. Failing becomes more important over the years. In the two most recent studies it ranked above "hated school".

The top reason for leaving given by females, has changed since 1972-73. In the two most recent surveys it was "to take job" (like the males), but not to the same degree. In the first survey job ranked second behind "hated school", and "other personal" ranked third. By the third survey "hated school" had dropped to fourth place, and "other personal" had gone up to second place.

"Failing" was well below the importance it assumed for males; it was sixth place in the first and third surveys. It is interesting to note that in the 1973-74 pilot we have a sample of more students who left school because they failed (or thought they were failing); the number (both females and males) giving that reason rose. "Needing money" became more important with each survey, perhaps because of the inclusion of a larger number of big city schools. In fact, over the three surveys the economic motivations seem to grow steadily in importance.

We checked the changing rank order over the years of reasons for leaving by the year of school left. There is not much difference between grades on the changing importance of the economic reasons — they remain high throughout. We expected "failing" to be a less common reason for leaving grade 13 than leaving the earlier grades. That was the case in the first survey which had covered only grades 11, 12 and 13. "Failing" had been only about the 5-6 rank. By 1974-75 it had not only generally become a more common reason for leaving school, it had risen in rank order in an unexpected way. It was third in importance in grade 9 and tied for third in grade 10.

We have no comparison as to what it might have been in those grades in 1972-73 and 1973-74. But for grades 11 and 12 over the three years it drops from fifth to fourth rank, and for grade 13 it rises from sixth to first and then drops to third. "Hated school", on the other hand, drops in importance, particularly in grade 11 where it declined from first to fifth.

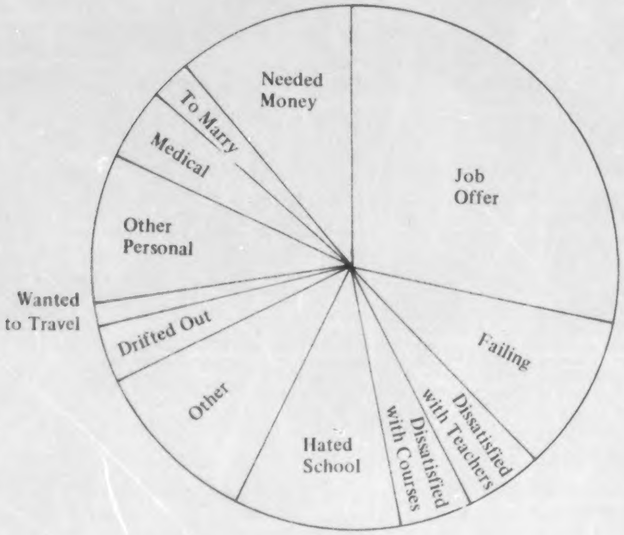
To check the changing rank order, over the years, of the students' reasons for leaving by their achievement level see table 22. The economic reasons for leaving stay high over all achievement levels, but there are interesting shifts in the non-economic ones (which may, of course, have had economic overtones). Other personal reasons are far more important for the A students than for the F students, and there is a decreasing rank order on this item by achievement level (with the exception of D students, who rank it the same as the B students, and above the C students' ranking). This difference remains pretty stable. "Failing", on the other hand, not only grows in importance as one decreases the achievement level, it has other interesting features: (1) In the first survey it was fairly unimportant for all but the Fs (usually sixth out of eight ranks, and in the case of A students none gave it as a reason). By the later surveys, however, it is high on the F and D students' responses (second out of 11; fourth out of 11), and higher up the Cs' lists (seventh out of 11 and fifth out of 11).

In summary: We found that, in the rank ordering of reasons for leaving school, the general importance of the economic reasons — particularly "left school to take a job" — did not change. That reason remained at or near the top of the lists. "Hated school" generally came next, and "failing", "personal other than financial" were of slightly lesser importance, but their relative positions varied for different groups. For girls the personal reasons were high and they hated school. For boys they were failing anyway and they hated school. "Hated school" appears lower in rank order the higher the grade left; and (which is hopeful) it seems to have decreased in importance each year, for each of the three grades for which we have comparative data. Among the reasons of the grade 13 dropouts, for example, in 1972-73 it was third out of eight, in 1973-74 it was tied for third out of eleven, in 1974-75 it was sixth out of eleven. "Failing" is another fairly important reason which changed its relative importance over the years, particularly if we analyse it by achievement level. It started out in 1972-73 as a very important reason but only for the F students, and then seemed to grow in incidence — although still not of top importance — to become fairly important for the D students too. The relative importance of failing did not change over the years for the C students, it remained fourth (but it should be noted that in the first survey that means fourth out of eight and for the other two fourth out of eleven).

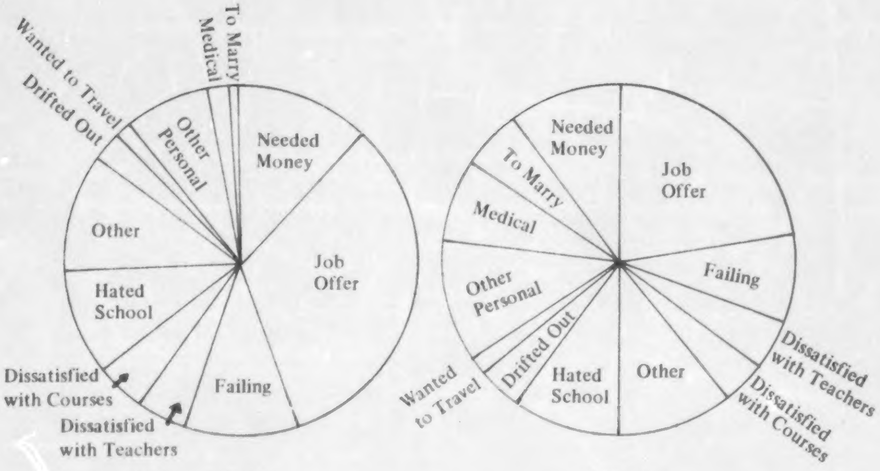
Before we leave discussion of the order of importance (frequency) of reasons given for leaving school, it is necessary to note a few things about 'ordering'. In the first survey we did not instruct students to indicate their first, second or third reason for dropping out, although we did provide space for them to list more than one if they so desired. As a result, since a substantial number of respondents gave more than one reason, we had the problem of identifying the 'first'. Of the 1109 respondents that year, 849 gave only one reason, 186 gave two and 74 three. So only the 1973-74 and 1974-75 studies are strictly comparable in that the students noted which reason was their first, second, etc.

The rank order is the position, in the total list, of the sum of the subjects advancing a specified reason. Thus job is first in 1974-75, because 2261 students reported it as their main reason, and this was the largest total for any of the reasons that year. The reader should be aware that when one uses ordinal numbers it implies that the distance between intervals is equal, as it is arithmetically — i.e., in arithmetic the interval between 1 and 2 is the same as that between 3 and 4. But in a scale based on characteristics, opinions, values or any such phenomenon the scale numbers stand for sums of magnitude and we cannot assume there is this equality between the intervals. The distance (in importance) between one student's first

Figure 12 DROPOUTS–PRINCIPAL REASON FOR LEAVING SCHOOL ACCORDING TO THE SEX OF THE DROPOUT, 1974-75



TOTAL



MALE

FEMALE

and second reason is not necessarily the same as that between his second and third one. And each of the distances between the firsts and seconds of two students are not necessarily identical. There are scaling problems implicit in rank ordering. These tables and comments, therefore, should be taken as being roughly as stated but as a description of the phenomenon represented they should not be pushed too far. Students undoubtedly have a main reason for leaving school. To determine how important their main reasons are to their subsidiary reasons is not easy. One can quickly gain a good impression of how frequently a reason is given. To determine precisely its shifting importance in the total picture is difficult. In addition to ranking, therefore, we shall analyse the numerical and percentage distribution of the reasons given in 1974-75, by sex, grade left and achievement level. In this way the 'values' (i.e., the magnitude of response) can be seen for each reason.

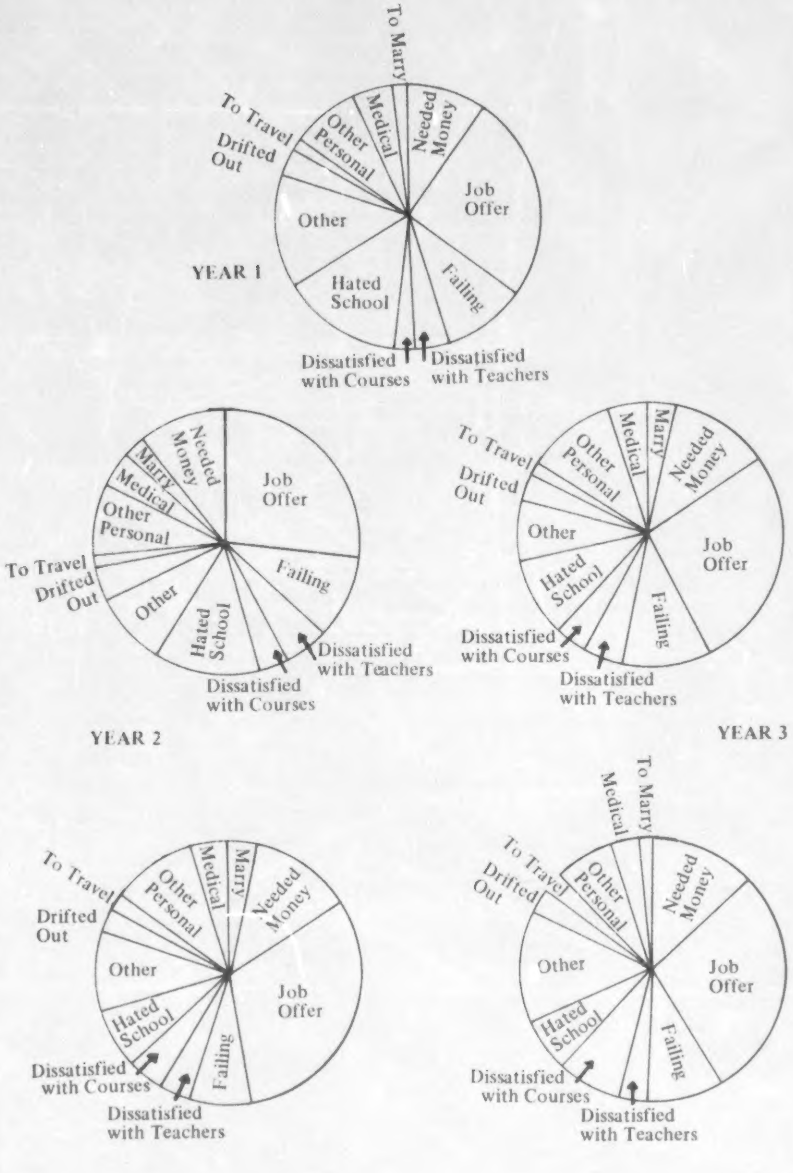
First reasons by sex

The different weights given to reasons for leaving school by males and females is immediately apparent — almost a third (32.6 percent) of the males left school because a job was offered and they took it. This was the most common reason given by the females, too, but was given by only 22.2 percent. Both absolutely and relatively in 1974-75 more males left school to take a job. They also left fairly frequently because of the need for money, because they were failing anyway, because they hated school — all these reasons were put forward by more than ten percent of the male sample. Over ten percent of the females, on the other hand, put forward a different set of reasons — a job, personal reasons other than money, the need for money, and hated school. So the chief difference between the sexes among the high frequency reasons for leaving school is the females' personal non-monetary reasons and the males' failing (see figure 12). If we group the reasons into three categories (economic, personal and school-related) we find the following numerical and percentage distribution:

Reason	Males		Females	
	No.	%	No.	%
Economic	2913	49.8	1139	36.6
Personal	684	16.9	1017	32.7
School	1349	33.3	956	30.7
Total	4046*	100.0	3112**	100.0

*excludes 487 males who responeed to the questionnaire but either did not indicate their main reason for leaving school or gave "other" reasons.
**excludes 358 females.

Figure 13 DROPOUTS–PRINCIPAL REASON FOR LEAVING SCHOOL ACCORDING TO THE GRADE LEVEL LEFT: ONTARIO 1974-75



YEAR 1

YEAR 2

YEAR 3

YEAR 4

YEAR 5

Using these figures and the 1974-75 estimated provincial dropout figure of 47,762 we obtain the following losses by broad grouping of reasons for leaving school:

Reason	Males	Females	Total
Economic	13,439	7,604	21,043
Personal	4,561	6,794	11,355
School	8,986	6,378	15,364
Total	26,986	20,776	47,762

All we have done here is take the same proportional representation, by sex and reason, as found among the sample of 1974-75. The males represented 56.5 percent of the actual total, so first we derived the estimated male total by taking 56.5 percent of 47,762. Then we estimated the three categories of males (and then females) by applying to the derived total(s) the percentages presented above (e.g., 49.8 percent, 16.9 percent and 33.3 percent).

First reasons by year (or grade) left

It is immediately apparent that although taking a job was the most important reason for students leaving all grades in 1974-75, it was not equally important for all grades. The percentage of year-1 dropouts giving that reason is lowest, and then the percentage grows steadily to year 4 (e.g., 25.7 percent, year-1; 27.2, year-2; 27.5, year-3; 31.7, year-4 and 29.0, year-5). The year-5 students are only slightly more represented among the job reasons than one would expect; the year-4 number definitely higher. The year-5 dropouts form 12.9 percent of those who gave job reasons and 12.5 of this sample; the year-4 dropouts, on the other hand, were 22.5 percent of the job reasons and 20.0 of this sample. In the earlier grades there is decided under-representation of those leaving to take jobs, e.g., year-1 dropouts form 15.0 percent of the sample but only 13.7 of the job reasons. The comparison may be seen in figure 13.

"Needed money" grows steadily in importance; the higher the grade the higher the proportion reporting this reason. The 109 students of grade 9 who gave this reason represent 9.4 percent of the grade 9 dropouts who appear in this sample, although this reason represents 11.4 of the students of the sample; and grade 9 students represent 12.4 percent of those who gave money as the first reason for leaving school, which is a lower proportion than expected because grade 9 students are 15.0 percent of the sample. The grade 9 and 10 students are under-represented, the grade 11, 12 and 13 over-represented; this can be seen from the following:

Reason for leaving school	Year 1	2	3	4	5	Total
Money	12.4	23.7	28.2	21.8	13.9	100.0%
Total sample	15.0	25.1	27.4	20.0	12.5	100.0%

"Failing" peaks as a reason for leaving, both in an absolute and relative sense, in year-3 (228 students gave it as their first reason, 29.9 percent of all who gave this reason). However, the difference between the expected and actual representation on this reason is greatest in year-4, as we see from the following:

Reason for leaving school	Year 1	2	3	4	5	Total
Failing	16.0	27.3	29.9	15.2	11.5	100.0%
Total sample	15.0	25.1	27.4	20.0	12.5	100.0%

The statistical significance of the distribution of first reason for leaving school in relation to the year left is high (i.e. it could not occur by chance). If we wish to predict what will cause a student to leave and how many will leave because of a given reason we must learn more of the causal relationships which lie behind such numbers as these. If the schools wish to reduce their attrition rates they also must learn how to influence reasons for leaving. The problem of analysing reasons for leaving is that they are interdependent in various ways and they develop over time. In order accurately to predict dropping out and to intervene successfully to prevent wastage, the school system needs to foresee the student's breaking point. Obviously this will vary with different individuals. It is related to time (i.e., the conviction grows that one must leave). What is needed are clues to indicate the speed of growth of the conviction to leave. The intensity of reasons for leaving (i.e., the intensity with which they are held) may be of less importance than the speed of changes in levels of intensity. We cannot provide such measurements at this time, either from our questionnaire or interview responses. Later in the report we return to this question of the timing of the decision to leave.

Before ending the discussion of principal reason for leaving school according to the year of school left we have two sets of estimates to present:

- The distribution of dropouts by economic, personal and school-related reasons for leaving, using the overall dropout figure of 47,762, and
- Within the same overall figure, the estimated provincial totals, using the percentage distribution of the eleven reasons given in response to the questionnaire.*

The distribution by the three main categories of reasons for leaving school was:

	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
Reason	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Economic	383	41.8	711	43.3	792	44.0	654	50.2	384	50.1
Personal	204	22.2	363	22.1	464	25.8	334	25.7	155	20.2
School	330	36.0	567	34.6	545	30.2	314	24.1	228	29.7
Total sample	917	100.0	1641	100.0	1801	100.0	1302	100.0	767	100.0

Economic reasons represent more than half those given by former grade 12 and 13 students, and between 42 and 44 percent of these given by students from other grades. Personal reasons for leaving school are given by about one fifth to one quarter of the dropouts; the latter proportion for former students of grades 11 and 12, the former for those from grade 13, and something between for the students from the other two grades. School related reasons decrease from more than one third of the total given by students in the lowest two grades to 24 percent of the former students of grade 12, and then rise so that students from grade 13 give this reason about as frequently as those from grade 11. If we apply these proportions to the estimated total of 47,762 dropouts we obtain the following number of 1974-75 dropouts from Ontario secondary schools by broad category of reason for leaving school and year/grade left:

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*In all these calculations the "other" category is omitted, which means we are assuming that the "other" are all reasons which, if reworded, could be fitted within the reasons we specified, and we are also assuming that when so fitted the "other" total will be distributed among the specified reasons in the same percentages as the specified reasons represent of the total given for the sample. This is one way of estimating and it is a reasonable one. However, we could have avoided making assumptions about the distribution of the "other" since we treat them in a separate section at the end of this chapter. In that case we should have subtracted from 47,762 a figure representing the proportion which the "other" are of the sample responses, and then estimated the sub-categories within the reduced estimated total (47,762, minus the "other"). We must use one set of figures or the other consistently; we have used the former.

Reason	Year 1	2	3	4	5
Economic	2855	5294	5884	4843	2848
Personal	1516	2702	3450	2480	1148
School	2459	4231	4039	2325	1688
Total Sample	6830	12227	13373	9648	5684

If we apply to the total 47,762 the proportions leaving school by the eleven reasons shown in the table on page 79 we can estimate the number of 1974-75 Ontario secondary school dropouts by specified reasons for leaving.

Estimated provincial dropouts (1974-75) by reason for leaving and year of program

	Year				
Reasons	1	2	3	4	5
Job offer	2104	3827	4172	3512	2001
Needed money	751	1480	1712	1331	847
To get married	116	355	495	376	57
Medical reasons	369	562	709	492	261
Other personal	669	1137	1551	1119	466
Failing	861	1467	1538	777	568
Dissatisfaction with teachers	273	660	602	338	171
Dissatisfaction with courses	178	355	522	434	489
Hated school	1154	1748	1391	777	460
To travel	20	98	160	174	171
Drifted out	335	538	521	318	193
Total	6830	12227	13373	9648	5684

First reasons by achievement level of dropout

The group of dropouts who left school because they were offered a

Actual sample (1974-75) by reason for leaving

Reasons	Year 1 No.	Year 1 %	Year 2 No.	Year 2 %	Year 3 No.	Year 3 %	Year 4 No.	Year 4 %	Year 5 No.	Year 5 %
Job offer	282	30.8	513	31.3	561	31.2	474	36.4	270	35.2
Needed money	101	11.0	198	12.1	231	12.8	180	13.8	114	14.9
To get married	16	1.7	47	2.9	66	3.7	51	3.9	8	1.0
Medical reasons	50	5.4	76	4.6	96	5.3	66	5.1	35	4.6
Other personal	90	9.8	153	9.3	209	11.6	151	11.6	63	8.2
Failing	115	12.6	197	12.0	207	11.5	105	8.1	77	10.0
Dissatisfaction with teachers	37	4.0	88	5.4	81	4.5	46	3.5	23	3.0
Dissatisfaction with courses	231	2.6	48	2.9	70	3.9	58	4.5	66	8.6
Hated school	155	16.9	234	14.3	187	10.4	105	8.1	62	8.1
To travel	3	0.3	14	0.8	22	1.2	23	1.8	23	3.0
Drifted out	45	4.9	73	4.4	71	3.9	43	3.3	26	3.4
Total	917	100.0	1641	100.0	1801	100.0	1302	100.0	767	100.0

job was largest, both in absolute number and percentage (604, 35.0 percent of the job group), among the D level students. There was a steady increase in the proportion who gave this reason for leaving school as the achievement level decreased until we reach the Ds, then there was a decline in the proportion of Fs. The As, Bs and Fs are somewhat under-represented among the job reasons, and the Cs and Ds over-represented. This is evident from the following:

Reason for leaving school	A	B	C	D	F	Total
Job offer	1.3	8.6	32.5	35.0	22.6	100.0%
Total sample	1.5	9.2	30.2	33.1	26.1	100.0%

Whereas 30 percent of the respondents for whom an average grade was reported gave taking a job as their chief reason for leaving school, only 27 percent of the As gave this reason, about 28 percent of the Bs, and fewer Fs, 26 percent. It was undoubtedly the most important single reason for leaving school, whatever the students' achievement level, but to a different degree for students of different ability.

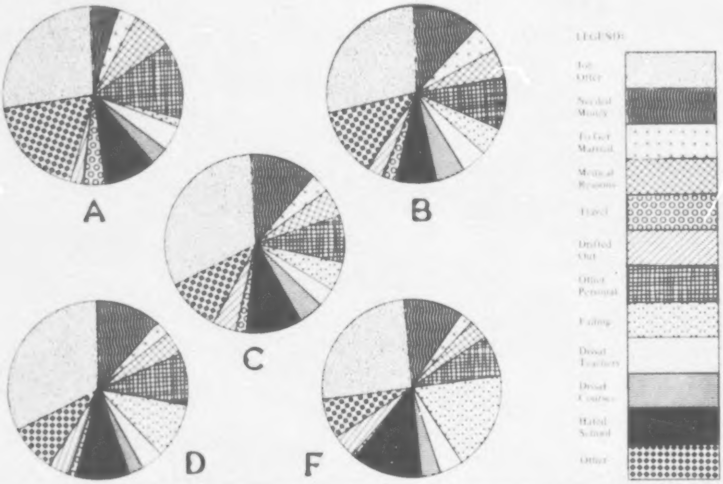
It is not surprising that the Fs formed the largest group of dropouts who gave "failing" as their first reason for leaving school (46.3 percent) but it *is* surprising that they only represent 18 percent of the F level respondents. In other words, although their latest average mark was an F, the chief reason why over four out of five of the F students left school was something other than their failing marks.

"Hated school" shows a similar distribution — rising as the marks scale descends. Actually the percentage representation of the Cs, Ds, and Fs is virtually a plateau with about 30 percent of those who hated school being in each mark level. The only noticeable over-representation is among the Fs, as we see from the following:

Reason for leaving school	A	B	C	D	F	Total
Hated school	1.3	6.2	30.0	31.2	31.3	100.0%
Total sample	1.5	9.2	30.2	33.1	26.1	100.0%

Figure 14 shows in graphic form the distribution of principal reasons for leaving school, according to the dropout's average marks just before he left.

Figure 14 DROPOUTS – FIRST REASONS FOR LEAVING BY ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS, 1974-75



If we cross-classify the dropouts by their achievement level and the three broad categories of reasons for leaving school, we get the following:

	A		B		C		D		F	
Reason type	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Economic	27	39.1	216	46.6	780	49.6	824	47.2	548	39.3
Personal	26	37.7	131	28.2	376	24.0	405	23.2	271	19.5
School	16	23.2	117	25.2	415	26.4	516	29.6	574	41.2
Total	69	100.0	464	100.0	1571	100.0	1745	100.0	1393	100.0
N = 5242		1.3		8.8		30.0		33.3		26.6

Using the estimate of 47,762 and the percentages shown above (i.e., 1.3 percent A level; 8.8, B, 30.0, C; 33.3, D; and 26.6 F), we obtain the following estimated number of provincial dropouts in 1974-75, according to their reasons for leaving and achievement level.

Reason type	A	B	C	D	F
Economic	243	1959	7107	7507	4993
Personal	234	1185	3439	3690	2478
School	144	1059	3782	4708	5234
Total	621	4203	14328	15905	12705

ECONOMIC REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL

By sex and month of leaving, the distribution of the *total* economic reasons given for leaving school, whatever their order of importance, was as follows:

Females:

Month	First reason	Second	Third	Fourth	Total	
					No.	%
September	127	47	20	6	200	10.9
October	262	112	43	32	449	24.5
November	160	82	23	12	277	15.1
December	60	18	12	6	96	5.2
January	116	53	17	9	195	10.6
February	130	34	10	11	185	10.1
March	82	28	8	8	126	6.9
April	102	26	9	6	143	7.8
May	93	38	13	7	151	8.2
June	7	2	2	1	12	0.7
Total	1139	440	157	98	1834	100.0

Possible N = female respondents x 2 = 7012

Males:

Month	First reason	Second	Third	Fourth	Total	
					No.	%
September	191	66	15	13	285	9.1
October	481	189	55	44	769	24.6
November	299	117	33	29	478	15.3
December	115	35	16	8	174	5.6
January	177	63	18	9	267	8.5
February	204	73	29	10	316	10.1
March	131	50	14	6	201	6.4
April	197	70	25	13	305	9.8
May	192	72	22	8	294	9.4
June	26	8	2	0	36	1.2
Total	2013	743	229	140	3125	100.0

Possible N = male respondents x 2 = 9072

Economic reasons for leaving school were clearly more important for the males than the females. The 3125 times which male dropouts gave such reasons represent 34.4 percent of the possible responses (i.e., of 4536 x 2) whereas for the females, the 1834 times represent only 26.2 percent of the possible responses.

It is interesting to note (in view of the findings that male and female dropouts tend to leave school at different times during the school year) that the percentage difference in the month of dropping out does not differ greatly from one sex to the other. This may be seen from the following (the heading numbers represent the months i.e., September = 1, June = 10):

Sex	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Males	9.1	24.6	15.3	5.6	8.5	10.1	6.4	9.8	9.4	1.2	100.0%
Females	10.9	24.5	15.1	5.2	10.6	10.1	6.9	7.8	8.2	0.7	100.0%

The distribution of the economic reasons for leaving school by sex and year of school in 1974-75 was:

Males:

					Total	
Year	First	Second	Third	Fourth	No.	%
1	271	86	25	8	390	12.9
2	475	154	47	36	712	23.6
3	510	201	62	40	813	27.0
4	415	170	49	30	664	22.0
5	268	109	36	23	436	14.5
Total	1939	720	219	137	3015	100.0

Possible N = males respondents x 2 = 9072

Females:

					Total	
Year	First	Second	Third	Fourth	No.	%
1	135	34	13	9	191	10.7
2	257	98	28	25	408	23.0
3	316	133	43	28	520	29.2
4	264	105	44	21	434	24.4
5	133	53	26	13	225	12.7
Total	1105	423	154	96	1778	100.0

Possible N = female respondents x 2 = 7012

For both males and females the combined economic reasons were more important for years 4 and 5 than would be expected. This may be seen from the following percentage distributions:

Males:

Reason	Year 1	2	3	4	5	Total
Economic	12.9	23.6	27.0	22.0	14.5	100.0
Male sample	16.0	25.2	26.4	19.0	13.3	100.0

Females:

Reason	Year 1	2	3	4	5	Total
Economic	10.7	23.0	29.2	24.4	12.7	100.0
Female sample	13.8	24.9	28.6	21.2	11.5	100.0

The distribution of economic reasons by sex and achievement level was as follows:

Males

Achievement level	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Total	
					No.	%
A	13	4	1	0	18	0.8
B	113	46	12	10	181	7.6
C	472	167	42	29	710	30.0
D	535	189	57	43	824	34.8
F	399	151	57	28	635	26.8
Total	1532	557	169	110	2368	100.0

Possible N = 9072

Females:

Achievement level	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Total	
					No.	%
A	14	5	2	1	22	1.6
B	102	53	13	7	175	12.6
C	308	98	46	29	481	34.6
D	288	113	33	19	453	32.6
F	149	70	23	17	259	18.6
Total	861	339	117	73	1390	100.0

Possible N = 7012

The percentage distribution of the total responses by achievement level is very similar to the percentage distribution of the first responses. This is because the number of dropouts who gave only one reason for leaving school was high; so high that that distribution greatly influences the total distribution. In other words, by giving the students extra chances to add subordinate reasons we did not greatly change the overall picture. It is interesting to note that although the economically motivated dropouts are more common among the males than females, the number of A, B and C level females represents a higher proportion of the economically motivated female dropouts than comparable groups represent of the economically motivated male dropouts (1.6 percent *v.* 0.8; 12.6 percent *v.* 7.6; 34.6 percent *v.* 30.0).

Among the dropouts interviewed there were 151 who had given one of the two economic reasons as their main reason for leaving school (i.e., their questionnaire showed this as their first reason), and there were 330 who had reported some economic reason (i.e., among their four reasons). They represent 40.8 percent of the total reasons given by the interview sample (on their questionnaires) 40.6 of their first reasons. The economically motivated dropouts represent 39.2 percent of the total questionnaire sample. In the interviews we found that 188 youngsters gave economic reasons as their main ones (50.5 percent). There has been some rationalizing after the fact. It is evident that the interview sample, more strongly than the questionnaire sample, represents students who left school for economic reasons.

To assess the kind of family background of students who gave economic first reasons for leaving school, we cross-tabulated the interview sample's first reasons by six items:

- whether the student lived at home
- whether the parents were or were not Canadian born
- whether the father was or was not employed
- the employed father's occupational status
- the number of siblings
- the family income

There were 166 interviews where the dropout had given an economic first reason for leaving school and had provided most of these items of information. Most of these students (135) lived at home. Most of them (124) had Canadian born fathers and mothers. Most of their fathers (123) were gainfully employed. Most of their mothers (79) were not employed outside the home, but the employed group (69) represent almost 42 percent of the total for whom we have information.

The occupational status of the fathers of these dropouts was as follows:

37 no occupation given
27 managerial, professional or technical employees, who included:
10 managers, 7 science or engineering professionals, 1 education professional (teacher, professor etc.), 1 artist, actor, or musician, etc. 8 other professional technical or managerial
2 clerical
3 salesmen
16 service and recreation occupations (10 of them were in personal service such as porter, elevator operator, janitor, launderer, dry cleaner, barber, hairdresser: three protective service such as policement, firemen, or security guards; and three other)
10 had transportation or communication occupations five of them were operators such as bus drivers, transport or taxi drivers; one a railway worker, two worked in air transport, the others "other forms of transport")
52 by far the largest number, were factory or production workers
11 were labourers and
8 were employed in primary industries (farm workers, logging, fishermen, miners or quarrymen).

If we divided them according to the description of their occupations into four status levels, we would put:

27	at status I (the highest),	21%
5	at status II	4
78	at status III	60
19	at status IV	15

There were 15 (9 percent) of these 166 dropouts who had no brothers or sisters. The rest were distributed as follows:

25	(15%)	had one sibling
26	(16%)	had two
32	(19%)	had three
18	(11%)	had four
21	(13%)	had five
7	(4%)	had six
6	(4%)	had seven
5	(3%)	had eight
11	(7%)	nine or more

If we consider a family of three children or fewer as a small family we find that 40 percent of the economically motivated dropouts from the interview sample came from small families.

Their family income data are not as complete as the other items. For 73 (44 percent) we have no income report. For the others the total family income (including that of the dropout if he was living at home and contributed to the family income) was reported as:

5	(3%)	Under $125 per week, or monthly or annual equivalent
11	(7%)	$125-$150
12	(7%)	$150-$175
11	(7%)	$175-$200
10	(6%)	$200-$225
13	(8%)	$225-$250
31	(19%)	$250 or more

The tast force was asked to judge the evidence of financial need, to assess whether this was a major reason for youth dropping out of school. We have shown that the most common reasons given by the students themselves are economic ones: the dropouts left school to take a job, or they needed money and therefore left school when they were offered a job, or they left school to look for a job. The interviews somewhat over-represent the economically motivated dropout, if we judge by the reasons advanced by the much larger questionnaire sample, but only slightly.

The interviews enabled us to check the dropouts' claimed economic motivation for leaving school, against family background. These dropouts do not, by and large, represent an economically select group and, since most of them live at home, we may assume that their need for money and desire to be employed for wages is a reflection of the financial condition at home. They come from larger families than are generally found in the Ontario population; their fathers' occupational status, the high incidence of mothers working, and the distribution of total family incomes (which represent at least two and frequently more than two — but probably less than three complete — sets of wages in 42 percent of the cases) suggest modest working class homes but not real poverty. However, in our opinion, for families of this size, the incomes recorded do represent financial need.

PERSONAL REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL

Personal reasons differ greatly from one category of student to another and by grouping them together we probably distort the picture somewhat. Our reason for doing so is to separate these dropouts from those whose motivations are economic and school-related. They form a residual, and for most of them the school is powerless to intervene to help the student avoid dropping out. "Personal" covers the following:

- to get married
- medical
- other personal
- to travel
- drifted out

Such reasons were given 3505 times among the 16,161 reasons listed. Since the student was given four chances to advance reasons, and there are 8141 respondents, this is 3505 times out of a possible 32,564. There was a probability of 10.8 out of 100 that a student would name a personal reason. By sex the distribution of the component personal reasons was as follows:

Males:

					Total	
Reason	First	Second	Third	Fourth	No.	%
married	23	28	8	8	67	4.1
medical	94	30	17	11	152	9.2
other personal	369	173	117	86	745	45.3
travel	57	73	82	69	281	17.1
drifted out	141	71	83	105	400	24.3
Total	684	375	307	279	1645	100.0

Possible total N of each category = male respondents x 4 = 4536 x 4 = 18,144

Females:

Reason	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Total No.	Total %
married	183	67	26	15	291	15.6
medical	265	64	17	11	357	19.2
other personal	393	162	90	59	704	37.9
travel	35	41	52	40	168	9.0
drifted out	141	56	65	78	340	18.3
Total	1017	390	250	203	1860	100.0

Possible N total of each category = female respondent x 4 = 3506 x 4 = 14,024

Of the males who gave personal reasons 684, 41.6 percent, gave such a reason as the first or main reason, 22.8 as a second, 18.7 as a third and 16.9 as a fourth. Since more than four personal reasons for leaving school were suggested, all the reasons of some dropouts may, of course, have been personal ones. Of the females who gave personal reasons 1017, 54.7 percent, gave one as the first or main reason, 21.0 as a second, 13.4 as a third and 10.9 as a fourth. Personal reasons for leaving school are more frequently given by girls than boys. Their total personal reasons represent 53.1 percent of such given. This is not to say that 53 percent of the females gave such reasons — any one girl could have reported as many as four personal reasons, all contributing to her decision to drop out. Much more informative is the finding that 1860 (the total personal reasons given by females) is 13.[illegible] percent of the possible total response while the comparable figure for the males is only 9.1 percent (i.e., 1645 is 9.1 percent of 18,144).

By sex and year left the distribution of the total personal reasons was as follows:

Males:

Year	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Total No.	Total %
1	100	35	32	34	201	12.8
2	149	81	52	60	342	21.9
3	205	109	80	77	471	30.1
4	123	84	69	54	330	21.1
5	78	52	58	33	221	14.1
Total	655	361	291	258	1565	100.0

Possible N = male respondents x 4 = 18,144

Females:

					Total	
Year	First	Second	Third	Fourth	No.	%
1	126	45	30	25	216	12.0
2	246	79	60	45	430	23.8
3	292	120	67	51	530	29.4
4	229	97	58	49	433	24.0
5	93	46	34	21	194	10.8
Total	986	387	239	191	1803	100.0

Possible N = 14,024

The distribution of the females' first and total personal reasons by school grade was very similar, as the percentage distributions given below demonstrate.

For the males this was not the case. Personal reasons were more commonly placed first by male dropouts from the three lower grades; and more often as second, third or fourth by those who were leaving the upper two grades. These distinctions may be seen from the following:

Males:

	Year					
Personal reasons	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Given as first reason	15.3	22.7	31.3	18.8	11.9	100.0
Total	12.8	21.9	30.1	21.1	14.1	100.0

Females:

	Year					
Personal reasons	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Given as first reason	12.8	24.9	29.6	23.2	9.4	100.0
Total	12.0	23.8	29.4	24.0	10.8	100.0

By sex and achievement level, the distribution of the total personal reasons was as follows:

Males:

Achievement level	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Total No.	Total %
A	6	1	1	2	10	0.9
B	36	20	17	9	82	7.1
C	129	78	70	38	315	27.0
D	170	107	77	68	422	36.2
F	125	72	63	76	336	28.8
Total	466	278	228	193	1165	100.0

Possible N = 18,144

Females:

Achievement level	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Total No.	Total %
A	20	7	2	1	30	2.2
B	95	43	25	13	176	12.8
C	245	102	65	44	456	33.3
D	234	102	67	62	465	34.0
F	146	49	28	19	242	17.7
Total	740	303	187	139	1369	100.0

Possible N = 14,024

Personal reasons for leaving school given by males as their first reasons represent 40 percent of the total male personal reasons: the first personal reasons of the females represent 54 percent of their total. High achieving females represent a higher proportion of the females who left for personal reasons than comparable males represent of their set. Thus the A level females represent 2.2 percent of the females giving personal reasons for leaving school, whereas the A level males form only 0.9 of the male total. Similarly the female Bs are 12.8 percent *v.* 7.1 and the Cs 33.3 percent *v.* 27.0.

Among the dropouts interviewed there were 76 (20.4 percent) who, on their questionnaires, had given one of the five personal reasons as their first or main reason for leaving school. Personal first reasons were given by 21.1 percent of the questionnaire respondents. However, when they were interviewed, only 33 dropouts (8.9 percent) gave a personal reason as the first or main one. Altogether there were 73 interviewed students who gave a personal reason as one of their set of (up to four) reasons. Again we found that there had been a certain amount of *ex post* justification which differed from the explanation given several months earlier. The postition of those leaving school for personal reasons, therefore, is somewhat under-represented among the interviews. Some dropouts, on reflection, have had second thoughts about their reasons for leaving school. Whether these more truly reflect the picture than the questionnaire responses is difficult to judge. We merely point out the difference. To assess the kind of family background of interviewed students who left school primarily because of personal reasons, we cross tabulated their first reasons by the same six items of family information as were reviewed for the economically motivated students.

There were 84 for whom we had most items of information:

61 (73%) of them lived at home
58 (69%) had fathers who were Canadian born and
59 (70%) mothers who were Canadian born
64 (76%) of the fathers were employed and
43 (51%) of the mothers were employed

Their fathers' occupations were as follows:

For 16 we have no information
17 were employed in managerial, professional or technical jobs, among them 8 were "managers"; 4 were "other professional"; 2 were artists, actors or musicians; 1 was a scientist, 1 a health or welfare professional (such as a doctor, dentist, medical technician, etc); and 1 a business professional (accountant, tax consultant, comptroller, systems analyst, etc.)
None was a clerical worker
5 were salesmen
6 had service or recreation occupations
9 had transportation or communications occupations
24 were factory or production workers
3 were labourers and
4 were employed in primary industries.

If we divide them according to the description of their occupation into four status levels we would put

17	at status I (the highest)	25%
5	at status II	8%
39	at status III	57%
7	at status IV	10%

This is a higher status distribution than that found among the fathers of the economically motivated dropouts (I = 25 percent *v.* 21; II = 8 percent *v.* 4).

It should also be noted that a smaller proportion of these students live at home (73 percent *v.* 81), and fewer have fathers or mothers who are Canadian born (69 or 70 percent *v.* 75). More of their fathers and mothers are employed (76 percent *v.* 74; 51 percent *v.* 42).

Seven of the 84 interviewed dropouts who gave personal reasons as their first or main ones for leaving school had no brothers or sisters (8 percent). The others were distributed as follows — the distribution of the economically motivated is given in brackets for comparison.

6	had one sibling,	7%	(15%)
14	had two	17%	(16%)
23	had three	27%	(19%)
13	had four	16%	(11%)
8	had five	10%	(13%)
4	had six	5%	(4%)
2	had seven	2%	(4%)
2	had eight	2%	(3%)
5	had nine or more	6%	(7%)

Considering three or fewer children as a small family 32 percent of this sub-sample came from small families — as compared with 40 percent of the economically motivated.

For 36 (43 percent) of the 84 we have no family income data. The others reported the following total incomes (again the economically motivated students' data are in brackets on the right):

Under $125 per week	7	8%	(3%)
$125-$150	7	8%	(7%)
$150-$175	2	2%	(7%)
$175-$200	3	4%	(7%)
$200-$225	2	2%	(6%)
$225-$250	10	12%	(8%)
$250 or more	17	20%	(19%)

The dropouts who gave personal reasons are more disparate in terms of family income — more are poorer and more are richer than the economically motivated dropouts. In considering the question of financial need to leave school it is interesting to note that this group (which left school for personal reasons) includes more needy youngsters than those dropouts who said they were leaving school primarily in order to get jobs or because they needed money.

SCHOOL-RELATED REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL

These are the reasons which were of prime interest to the task force. They vary considerably as to focus. One of those which we specified on the questionnaire was dissatisfaction with teachers and teaching, another dissatisfaction with programs or courses of study. But there is also more generalized dissatisfaction which might be either self-directed or institution-directed. These we specified as "failing anyway, might as well leave" or "hated school, couldn't hack it any longer". Such reasons were given 6473 times out of the 16,161 reasons reported. Since four school-related reasons were listed on the questionnaire, and students were given the opportunity to give four different reasons, all might have figured on a student's list (i.e., no other type of reasons given). So, with 8141 respondents, school-related reasons might have been chosen 32,564 times.

By sex, the distribution of the component school-related reasons was as follows:

17

Males:

Reason	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Total No.	Total %
Failing	495	397	212	78	1182	31.6
Dislike of teachers	207	249	145	68	669	17.9
Dislike of courses	195	270	190	98	753	20.2
Hated school	452	289	250	143	1134	30.3
Total	1349	1205	797	387	3738	100.0

Possible N = no. of male respondents x 4 = 4536 x 4 = 18,144

Females:

Reason	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Total No.	Total %
Failing	288	266	125	59	738	27.0
Dislike of teachers	157	193	113	51	514	18.8
Dislike of courses	146	224	168	64	602	22.0
Hated school	365	224	177	115	881	32.2
Total	956	907	583	289	2735	100.0

Possible N = no. of female respondents x 4 = 3506 x 4 = 14,024

"Failing" represented about one-third of all the reasons mentioned by males in 1974-75; "hated school" was almost as prevalent for the females. Criticism of teachers was the least important school-related reason given for leaving school; it was slightly more frequent among female dropouts than the males but in neither case was it as high as 20%.

By sex and year left the distribution of the total school-related reasons was as follows:

Males:

Year left	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Total No.	Total %
1	100	182	96	44	422	14.4
2	149	295	203	97	744	25.3
3	205	318	219	103	845	28.7
4	123	193	143	76	535	18.2
5	78	162	101	52	393	13.4
Total	655	1150	762	372	2939	100.0

Possible N = no. of male respondents x 4 = 18,144

Females:

Year left	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Total No.	Total %
1	133	114	76	29	352	13.2
2	273	238	147	76	737	27.6
3	279	256	164	78	777	29.1
4	152	175	122	77	526	19.7
5	95	101	58	23	277	10.4
Total	932	884	567	283	2666	100.0

Possible N = no. of female respondents x 4 = 14,024

For the females the distribution of school-related first reasons by year was very similar to the distribution of the total school-related reasons, except for grade 12. Dropouts from that grade who gave one (or more) school-related reasons for leaving school represent a higher proportion of the total of such reasons (19.7 percent) than such first reasons (16.3 percent) — i.e., these female dropouts tend to list a school-related reason as their second, third or fourth reason for leaving school. Among the males those who gave school-related reasons as their first reasons for leaving school have a different distribution by year, from those who merely include one of these among their total reasons. Males from grades 9 and 10 gave a school-related reason more frequently as their first; those from the higher grades show school-related reasons more commonly as one of their subordinate reasons. This may be seen from the percentage distributions given below:

Males:

School-related reason	Year 1	2	3	4	5	Total
First reason given	17.6	27.8	26.1	15.7	12.7	100.0%
Total	14.4	25.3	28.7	18.2	13.4	100.0%

Females:

School-related reason	Year 1	2	3	4	5	Total
First reason	14.3	29.3	29.9	16.3	10.2	100.0%
Total	13.2	27.6	29.1	19.7	10.4	100.0%

By sex and achievement level the distribution of the total school-related reasons for leaving school was as follows:

Males:

Achievement level	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Total	
					No.	%
A	7	4	4	1	16	0.6
B	56	47	35	15	153	5.7
C	219	192	142	64	617	23.1
D	297	301	204	93	895	33.6
F	376	317	194	100	987	37.0
Total	955	861	579	273	2668	100.0

Possible N = 18,144

Females:

Achievement level	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Total	
					No.	%
A	9	7	4	2	22	1.1
B	61	59	38	23	181	9.4
C	193	203	117	59	572	29.5
D	219	220	142	72	653	33.7
F	198	159	104	48	509	26.3
Total	680	648	405	204	1937	100.0

Possible N = 14,024

The 955 males who gave a school-related first reason represent about the same proportion of those who listed a school-related reason among their set, as the female first school-related reason group represent of the total females giving such a reason (36 percent *v.* 35). However when we look at the achievement levels represented by the total number of school-related reasons for leaving school we see that a higher proportion of the females are accounted for (1.1 percent As *v.* 0.6; 9.4 percent Bs *vs* 5.7; 29.5 percent Cs *v.* 23.1).

Among the dropouts who were interviewed there were 115 (30.9 percent) who on their questionnaires had given a school-related reason as their first reason for leaving school. Dropouts who gave such a first reason represent 28.7 percent of the respondents to the questionnaire. Among the total number interviewed 142 (38.2 percent) gave a school-related reason as their main motive for leaving. With second thoughts these reasons had grown in number. Which proportion represents the true weight to be given to school-related reasons for leaving school we cannot say. Since the interviews took place some months after the student left school, they may be considered either as representing rationalizations in the light of later developments (i.e., *post hoc* reasoning), or as representing more detached, less emotional views.

To assess the family background of interviewed dropouts who gave school-related reasons, we cross-tabulated their first reason for leaving school by the same set of items as was described for the other sub-samples.

Information on most of these items was given by 127 dropouts who had given school-related reasons. In order to compare their characteristics with those of students who were motivated to leave school primarily because of economic or personal reasons, we have put the latter's percentages in brackets at appropriate points. In parentheses appear first the percentages for economic reasons and then those for personal reasons, e.g., 112 of these former students, 88 percent, still live at home (81 percent, 73 percent).

Other studies have found that the educational background of parents is a most important factor in forming their children's attitude to schooling. Therefore, for this group we checked both the father's and mother's education. For 30 of the fathers (about 24 percent) there was no schooling information; the rest were distributed as follows:

2 had had the equivalent of a grade 3 education or less
5 had left between grades 4 and 6
25 had finished school between grades 7 and 8
11 had completed grade 9
8 had completed grade 10
10 had completed grade 11
19 had completed grade 12
6 had completed grade 13
3 had had 1 or 2 years of university
6 had had 3 or 4 years of university
1 had attended graduate school and
1 had attended some non-university post-secondary institution.

If we group them by educational level we get the following picture:

1. 32 (33%) had finished the equivalent of elementary school or less
2. 29 (30%) had finished the intermediate level of school (grades 9-11) or less, but had some experience of secondary school.
3. 25 (26%) had some experience of senior secondary school
4. 9 (9%) had experienced undergraduate university study
5. 1 (1%) had post graduate university experience
6. 1 (1%) had experience of non-university, post-secondary study

We have the same information for the mothers, but for a slightly smaller number (92 out of 127). The easiest way to compare the educational distribution of the parents is as follows:

	Educational Level					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fathers	33	30	26	9	1	1%
Mothers	15	50	27	5	1	2%

About two thirds of the fathers and mothers of these youngsters had left school before the equivalent of Ontario grade 12.

Seven percent of these dropouts had no siblings (9 percent, 8 percent). The rest had the following numbers of brothers and sisters:

21 had one,	17%	(15%, 7%)
29 had two,	23%	(16%,17%)
28 three,	22%	(19%,27%)
10 four,	8%	(11%,16%)
15 five,	12%	(13%,10%)
5 six,	4%	(4%, 5%)
4 seven,	3%	(4%, 2%)
1 eights,	1%	(3%, 2%)
5 nine or more,	4%	(7%, 6%)

Small families represent 47 percent of those who left for school-related reasons, compared with only 40 percent who left for economic reasons, and 32 percent because of personal problems.

We had thought that the school-related dropping out might be caused by large family size; that this group might represent youngsters who lacked individual parental attention because parents' time had to be shared with many siblings. The reader is reminded of the general picture: from the general interview responses we found that dropouts come from larger families than is common in Ontario (as evidenced by the 1971 census). A larger number of those who left for school-related reasons, though, come from smaller families than the other interviewed groups. In the interview sample as a whole we found that 28 had no siblings living at home (22%), 35 had one (28%), 29 had two (23%). So for 73 percent of these dropouts it was not true that so many siblings were competing for parental attention that the youngsters might have had too little individual supervision.

For this group of dropouts the reported total family income was as follows:

For 48 (38%) we have no information		(44%, 43%)
Under $125 per week	6, 5%	(3%, 8%)
$125-$150	11, 9%	(7%, 8%)
$150-$175	5, 4%	(7%, 2%)
$175-$200	10, 8%	(7%, 4%)
$200-$225	6, 5%	(6%, 2%)
$225-$250	7, 6%	(8%, 12%)
$250 or over	34, 27%	(19%, 20%)

The interviewed dropouts who left school for school-related reasons definitely come from more affluent families than the other two groups — 38 percent had a 1974-75 family income of $200 per week or more as compared to 34 percent of those who left school because of personal reasons, and 33 percent of those who left for economic reasons. In the very low family income category, below $150 per week, they come between the other two sub-samples — 14 percent have such a family income as compared with 16 percent of those who left for personal reasons and 10 percent for economic reasons.

We were asked particularly to comment on the relationship between the school-related reasons for dropping out and the likelihood of the student's return to school. For the questionnaire sample, therefore, we cross-tabulated first-reasons-for-leaving by first-plans. These data are shown in tables 23 and 24. Of the males who gave a school-related first reason for leaving school, the largest percentage plan to return to the same secondary school, but it is less than one-fifth of the total. Almost as many intend to stay at their current jobs or seek better ones and the two job plans combined exceed the return to secondary school plans combined (another 9 percent plan to return to a different secondary school). These return-to-school-plan categories (combined) represent an even higher proportion of males whose main reasons for leaving were personal (30.5 percent *v.* 24.6) but a smaller proportion of those who left for economic reasons (16.7 percent). There is statistically a highly significant relationship between the first reason a dropout gives for leaving school and his/her first plan for future activity. This is true both of males and females. The females' percentages comparable to those cited above are as follows:

11.3 percent of the ones who left because of a school-related reason plan to return to the same secondary school

10.0 percent to a different secondary school

The combined proportion planning to return to school is 21.3 percent; the comparable proportion for those who gave personal first reasons for leaving school was higher (26.3 percent), and for those who gave economic first reasons was lower (10.6).

There is, of course, a considerable difference between saying that one will return to school and actually returning. Among the interviewed students there were 44 who had actually returned to school by the time they were interviewed. They represent 10.3 percent of the interview sample, not something between 30.5 and 16.7, which might have been expected. We cross-classified these 44 dropouts by their first reason for leaving. From two there was no response on this question. Half of the remaining 42 had left for economic or personal reasons:

5	(11.4%)	had left to take a job
1	(2.3%)	because they needed money
5	(11.4%)	for medical reasons
6	(13.6%)	for other personal reasons
1	(2.3%)	just had drifted out
3	(6.8%)	for other reasons

Half had left for school-related reasons:

7 (15.9%) because they were failing anyway
2 (4.5%) because of dissatisfaction with teachers
4 (9.1%) because of dissatisfaction with courses and
8 (18.2%) just hated school and could hack it no longer

The final section of this chapter shall be devoted to a description of the open-ended (i.e., written-in) responses on the questionnaires.

OTHER REASONS GIVEN FOR LEAVING SCHOOL

There were 1193 replies to this question written on the questionnaires. First they shall be dealt with all together, regardless of whether they were the first, second, third or fourth reasons given; then we shall describe the 819 which were written in as first or main reasons. "Other" reasons represent 7.4 percent of the total 16,161 recorded, and 10.2 percent of the 8067 first reasons recorded. They were coded into 22 categories according to type. To do this we had to determine the essential nature of the reason, regardless of its verbal description. Many of these categories, of course, amount to the same reasons as those which we specified, but to the respondents they appeared sufficiently different to necessitate reporting separately, so we have kept them separate.

- There were 281 (23.6 percent) who explained that they had transferred. Sometimes it was clear that the transfer to another school had led to unhappiness and dissatisfaction, and hence to the decision to drop out. Sometimes this was not explicit. There may be cases where the student intended to report that he/she was not a dropout but a transfer, but unless this was clearly stated we did not assume it to be the case. The presumption is that the students reporting transfer as a reason for leaving school are indeed dropouts. This is a reasonable assumption because we received a number of letters and phone calls notifying us of errors in the school records. Generally they began with an unequivocal statement such as "You have made a mistake. I have not dropped out of school. I only transferred from__________to__________".

- There were 42 (3.5 percent) who just wanted a break from school. Problems and work were piling up. Relations with teachers, peers or families were becoming strained. It seemed necessary and desirable to have a breathing spell. These students usually explain earnestly that they never *intended* to leave school permanently. Sometimes they also reported when they planned to return. In fact, of course, their behaviour is very similar to our specified reason category, "drifted out". For some reason the student has been unable to solve his problems. They mount in severity, one reinforcing another. Frequently he develops bad attendance habits. This exacerbates the school-related problems and irritates school authorities. If the basic problem is outside the school, the school authority's reaction, when it is made known to parents, has the effect of reinforcing the home difficulty. Either the school or the home forces the student to make a choice, and the choice is to leave school.

- The third category is not so much a reason for leaving as a rationalisation of the decision to leave. There were 48 (4.0 percent) dropouts who explained that completion of their school program was not necessary for (was irrelevant to) their work or career plans and so they left. This type of sour-grapes response would be understandable as an auxiliary reason to the main one (e.g., "I needed money. I had been working part-time at this job for over a year. They offered me a job full-time. It was a good opportunity. I wanted to get into the__________trade and here was a chance. Anyway graduation from school is not needed to be a__________"). But 29 of these youngsters gave this write-in reason as their first reason for leaving school.

- There were 46 (3.9 percent) who left school to join the armed forces. In this, as in many other cases where reasons were described, one is led to ask: "Why leave now to join the armed forces? They will still be there in June when you have completed the school year (or one, two, or the requisite number of years hence, when you have completed your school program)". One wonders also what questions the armed forces authorities ask their new recruits about their departure from school. Is it their practice to inquire into the circumstances? Would they prefer the youngster at least to complete his school year?

- There were 215 (18.0 percent) who left school to pursue some other form of education. In chapter 4 we report the students' activities (i.e., their replies to the question: "What are you doing now") There were 5.4 percent of the 1974-75 respondents (412) who gave as their first or main activity "studying" (full or part-time). Some of these 215 will be among them. But from the written-in explanations it is evident that not all who intended to undertake some other educational program are actually studying (either full or part-time).
- The next category consists of dropouts who wished to be precise about the reason for leaving school, as it appeared to them at the time they made the decision. Therefore they wrote that they left to *look for* a job, rather than ticking off the specified category "to take a job". There were 93 (7.8 percent) such responses, and for all practical purposes they might well be added to the specified job category. From the interviews it is apparent that not all those who ticked the specified job offer category on their questionnaires had the job *before* they left school. The specified job reason was carefully worded to try to discriminate between those who left because they had a job and those who left because they wanted to have a job. But, in spite of our wording, not all dropouts distinguished between the two.
- There were 84 (7.0 percent) who insisted, sometimes vehemently and at length, that they had not dropped out. They had been expelled or suspended. This in spite of the school's record that they had been neither expelled nor suspended.
- For 36 (3.0 percent) the reason given was a variation on the specified category "failing anyway, might as well leave". They just could not keep up with the work. Sometimes they were failing the school's expected performance norm; sometimes they were failing their own or their family's. To be unable to keep up does not always mean actual failure. Some students drop out because they fear failure. They believe that it is better to have an incomplete record than a poor one. If their perception is true, it says much about employers and officials in other educational institutions. Do we penalize those who try and fail, and give preference to those who leave rather than fail? If so it would seem that our society does not esteem persistence, perseverance or endurance.
- There were two (0.2 percent) youngsters who form a sub-set of this category. We assigned them to a separate category because

of the circumstances described. They left because they were failing to "keep up", but they had got behind with their work in the first place because of medical reasons. They had had home study arrangements. When these were terminated the youngsters simply could not cope.

- And one (0.1 percent) other dropout represents a sub-set of the alternative education category. This student left in order to be able to finish secondary school part-time by correspondence course. Given the Ministry's regulations about correspondence study we assumed that this must be an auxiliary reason, but that was not so. This was the student's main reason for leaving school. He *insists* that he left school *because* he wished to study by correspondence.
- For nine students (0.8 percent) the school atmosphere was too restrictive. There were too many rules and so they left. They might well have been added to the critics of programs and courses, but we decided to keep them separate.
- For 21 (1.8 percent) the complaint was of fellow students. They had no friends. The students were "snobs", "immature", etc. For one reason or another these dropouts just did not fit in.
- The next category comprises those who represent another version of the "drifted out" reason. There were 71 (5.9 percent) who were bored with programs, courses, studying, schools and school work and just, eventually, stayed away.
- There were 40 (3.3 percent) who confessed that they had had poor attendance patterns. They "goofed off". Again this seems to be a sympton, rather than a cause. It is understandable as an auxiliary reason for leaving school rather than the main one.It is an excuse rather than a reason, but 24 youths gave it as their first reason for dropping out.
- According to 19 students (1.6 percent) the credit or semester system caused them to leave school. We were surprised at the small number. Both have received public criticism over the past two years and, on convenient scapegoat grounds alone, we expected a larger number of students to give them as reasons for failing to complete school.*
- There were seven (0.6 percent) who had specific complaints of

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* See also chapter 5, where students were asked if recent school changes influenced their dropout decision — a few mentioned the credit system and a few the semester organization of the school year.

the school's administration or administrators which they gave as reasons for leaving school.

- There were four (0.3 percent) whose complaints dealt with a specific teacher. The teacher's "condescending attitude" was objectionable.
- Eleven (0.9 percent) strictly should be considered "kept outs" rather than "dropouts". They were in jail, under arrest, or being held by the courts in custody — i.e., they could not have attended school even if they had wished to.
- There were 43 (3.6 percent) who had left home. Because they had to support themselves, they left school.
- Another ten (0.8 percent) left for household reasons — households other than their own (that is, not because they had got married). One common response was that they left school to look after their younger brothers and sisters because of some family crisis (father deserted, mother deserted, a divorce or separation and the surviving parent just unable to manage).
- Then there were eight (0.7 percent) who described various adjustment problems they were unable to solve which eventually drove them out of school. (These were not failures to adjust to a transfer, i.e., "Had to transfer because family moved, and did not like the new school, did not like its teachers". That type of response was put in category 1 described above.) The adjustments needed might relate to teachers or courses, but more commonly these were complex logistics problems outside the school's control, relating to the student's personal life.
- Finally there were 102 dropouts (8.6 percent) whose written-in reasons for leaving school were so unique as to defy categorization.

Using the total of these reasons (whether given as first, second, third or fourth) we grouped them by type, as we did the specified reasons earlier in this chapter. We were not sure that all transfers represent dropouts, so they were kept as a separate group. The five 'type' categories were then cross-classified by the sex, year left and achievement level of the student.

The school-related category includes those who:

just wanted a break
wanted to enter other educational institutions
were expelled or suspended
just could not keep up

could not keep up after the 'home study' teaching was terminated
left to study by correspondence
disliked the restrictive school atmosphere
criticized their fellow students
were bored
had had poor attendance patterns and were forced to make a choice, and left
disliked the semester arrangement or the credit system
had quarrels with the administrators or criticized school administration
complained of teachers' condescending attitudes

The economic category includes those who:

claimed that schooling was irrelevant to their jobs or career plans
had joined the armed forces
left to look for a job

The personal category includes those who:

were in jail, under arrest or in custody
had left home and so had to leave school
had to take over a household in emergency
had some adjustment problem

Total open-ended reasons by sex

We know the sex of 1180 of the 1193 students who wrote in a reason for leaving school (see table 25). It is not surprising that the open-ended school-related reasons for leaving school are the most common, there were a very large number of component reasons in this category. These written-in reasons add considerable weight to the specified school-related reasons discussed above. Almost half (46 percent) of the written-in reasons for dropping out were school-related ones.

The statistical relationship between the sex of the dropout and the type of reason for leaving school written on the questionnaire is significant but weak. In other words the kind of written-in reasons likely to be advanced by male dropouts cannot predictably be distinguished from those likely to be given by females.

Total open-ended reasons by year left

We have these two items of data for 1132 dropouts (see table 26). There is a highly significant statistical relationship between the year of school the student has dropped out of and the type of reason he is likely to write in to account for his decision. The grade 9 students are concentrated in the transfer category; so are grade 10, but not to the same degree. The upper school students do not seem to be sufficiently disturbed by changing schools to actually drop out. It may be that the incidence of transfer is higher in the lower two grades, we do not have statistics by which we could judge. In any case, for whatever reason, almost half the grade 9 written in reasons for leaving school (46.5 percent) involved transfers. The largest number of such reasons for the grade 10 dropouts, on the other hand, was in the school-related category (40.3 percent). This was also true for the other grades. Given the proportionate distribution by type of reason in this sub-sample as a whole, we find the dropouts from grades 10 and 13 over-represented among dropouts writing in economic reasons for leaving school; those from grades 12 and 13 are over-represented among the school-related reasons; and those from grades 11 and 12 over-represented among the personal reasons. By comparing the written-in reasons by year and sex (see tables 27 and 28), it is clear that, although the grade 9 dropouts of both sexes were bothered by transfer problems, this involved males more than females.

Total open-ended reason by achievement level

We have these two items of data for 772 dropouts (see table 29). There is a statistically significant relationship between the type of reason a student will write-in to account for his decision to leave and his achievement level, but it is weak. It is interesting to note that the lower the achievement level, the less the student seems to have been disturbed by a school transfer. In this sub-sample as a whole 19.7 percent of the written-in reasons for leaving school involved transfers. But the proportion of the A level students writing in about transfers was 36.8 percent. For the other achievement levels it was as follows: Bs, 26.3 percent; Cs, 21.0; Ds, 18.6; Fs, 13.1. This was unexpected. We would have assumed that the poorer the student academically, the more likely he would be to leave school if his work was disrupted by transfer. But it may be reasoned that the disturbing *effect* of a transfer is the change it causes in academic performance and personal relations. The latter is probably independent of expected achievement. The former may be linked in the following manner: if a high-achievement student transfers, and remains a high achiever, he is unlikely to drop out; but if a high-achievement student transfers and then finds his performance does not meet his usual standards, he may blame the school and leave. If a low-achievement student transfers, and his achievement remains low, it is what he expects and he may or may not leave school (depending upon other factors). If a low-achievement student transfers, and finds his performance is even lower than usual, he is more likely to blame himself than the school — after all, he has a history of achieving below the expected norm.

The C and D level students are over-represented among those whose written-in reasons were economically motivated. The D and F students were over-represented among school-related reasons, the Cs and As under-represented. The A level students were particularly over-represented among those who said that personal or family problems drove them out of school.

Open-ended first reasons

The written-in first reasons do not differ greatly from the total written-in reasons, and we shall not spend a great deal of time discussing them. Since some of these reasons appear more reasonable as auxiliary ones, contributing to but not causing dropping out, it is of interest to see how many times they were reported as the main reason for leaving school. This is best shown by a distribution of the actual numbers, shown on the next page.

The open-ended reasons for leaving school (i.e., those written-in by the students who replied to the questionnaire) are reported primarily because they add human interest to the statistics on dropout, rather than because they add new reasons to those which had been specified. Many could have been fitted into the specified categories. However, since a large number of students attached explanatory notes giving the background to their story, these added insights of the same type as were gained from the interviews. The open-ended reasons are more school-related and critical of schools and school personnel than the responses to the specified reasons suggest. They

Code*	First written-in reasons	Total written-in reasons
1	253	281
2	18	42
3	29	48
4	38	46
5	145	215
6	63	93
7	65	84
8	26	36
9	0	2
10	1	1
11	3	9
12	5	21
13	27	71
14	24	40
15	12	19
16	4	7
17	2	4
18	7	11
19	27	43
20	5	10
21	2	8
22	42	102
Total	819	1193

have the effect of reinforcing the school-related reasons for dropping out, raising their total significance. The only new finding these data contain (which does not appear in the interviews or questionnaire responses) is the disturbance which transfer seems to cause for high achieving students.

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*The code numbers stand for the twenty-two reasons, described on pages 102 to 107.

4

What Happened to Them?

CURRENT ACTIVITIES OF THE DROPOUTS

This part of the report sets out to answer two of the questions posed: "What happens to students after they leave school?" and, "How many are returning to formal education and for what reasons?" The latter really involves two groups:

- those who had already entered some other educational setting (some other school or a different type of educational institution, or even re-entered their own school) by the time they received our questionnaire or were interviewed; and
- those who *said* they would be returning to school (or some other institution) whether they did or not. For the latter we are really talking about *plans*.

In chapter 6 we shall deal with the plans. Here we shall discuss those who were involved in some sort of formal study when they were contacted. The interview data, discussing educational and other plans, provide some evidence of whether students realize what would be necessary in order to achieve their plans. They also show why the students wish to return to formal study.

All three surveys asked the question: "What are you doing now?" The 1974-75 questionnaire gave a list of specified activities and provided space for the student to report any activity not designated, and also to write in the type of work and name of the firm (if they were working) or name the school where they were studying. We coded up to three reported activities and the "other". We shall discuss the principal activity, then the open-ended other activities, and then the total activities reported. The 1973-74 survey used the same wording for this question and also gave the student the opportunity to report more than one current activity. This was the format which was adopted after revising the 1972-73 form, which had provided for a slightly different set of choices and had not differentiated between working or studying full or part-time. The revision in the wording was dictated largely by the responses to the first survey year, particularly the comments written-in by students.

In the interview schedule we provided five sections for discussing current activities — one each for those who had already returned to high school, who were studying full-time elsewhere, were working, were unemployed, or were otherwise engaged.

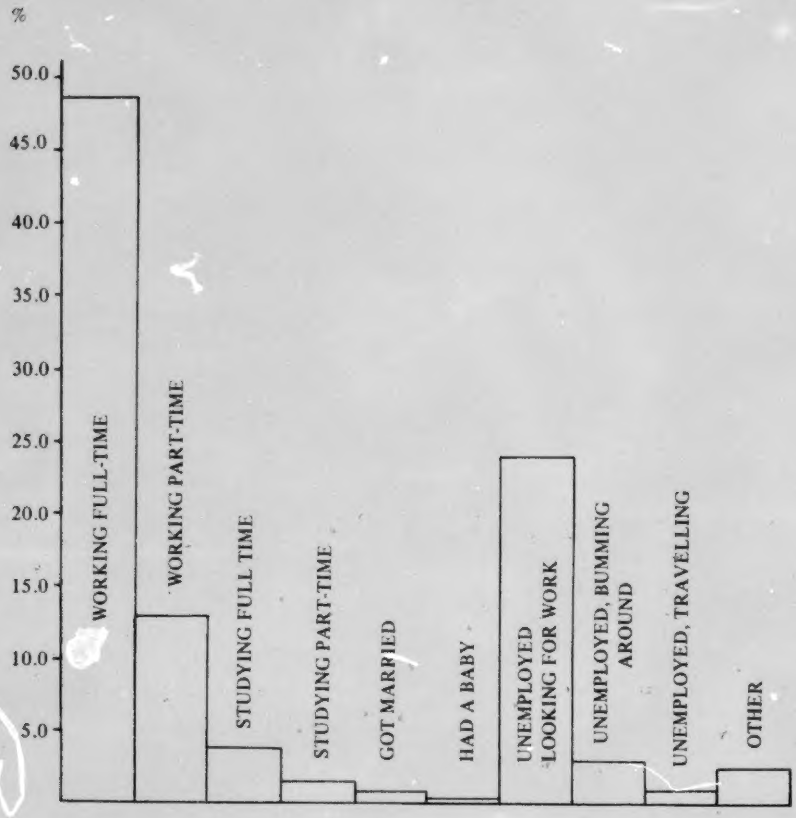
FIRST OR PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY

In 1974-75 there were 7635 dropouts who replied to this question listing at least one activity (see figure 15). These first activites were distributed as follows:

First activity response	No.	%
Working full-time	3718	48.7
Working part-time	989	13.0
Studying full-time	296	3.9
Studying part-time	116	1.5
Got married	84	1.1
Had a baby	51	0.7
Unemployed, looking for work	1843	24.1
Unemployed, just bumming around	244	3.2
Unemployed, travelling	84	1.1
Other	210	2.7
Total	7635	100.0

In 1973-74 there were 1715 students who answered this question; in 1972-73, 1415. The percentage distribution of the activities each year was as follows (since the wording was not identical in all three years the activities have to be grouped):

Figure 15 DROPOUTS – PRINCIPAL PRESENT ACTIVITY, 1974-75



		1973-74		
		Excluding	Including	
First activity response	1972-73	9 & 10	9 & 10	1974-75
Working	67.4	66.0	65.5	61.7
Unemployed	10.2	20.0	21.0	28.4
Studying	6.2	6.4	5.6	5.4
Got married/had a baby	13.6	3.4	3.5	1.8
Other	2.6	4.4	4.4	2.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N =	1415	1344	1714	7635

The reader is reminded that: (1) the 1972-73 survey only covered dropouts from grades 11, 12 and 13; the 1973-74 one was intended to cover the same grades, but two large city boards included all their secondary school grades; in the earlier year we provided for certain activity choices which thereafter (because they were not large) appeared under "other" (such things as "working at home, not for wages"; "helping in the family business, not for wages"); in 1973-74 and 1974-75 the former comes under the "got married" category, the latter under "other". It is evident that over the three years the proportion of dropouts who were working diminished steadily, and the proportion unemployed grew. In our opinion this is a true picture, but perhaps not quite to the extent suggested by these figures. In 1972-73 we might well have put into the unemployed category both the dropouts who were working in the family business but not for wages, and those working at home but not for wages. This would have increased the unemployed category to 15.1 percent and reduced the "married/baby", etc. one to 9.7 percent. Even with this adjustment the proportion of unemployed would rise from 15.1 percent to 20, and then to over 28. We shall return to the questions of unemployment and stability of employment when we describe the dropouts who are working.

Therefore, the simple answer to the first question asked, is that the largest group of dropouts (between 62 and 67 percent) were working when they were contacted. This has not changed over the three years. The finding is not surprising, since we have already reported that the main reason for leaving school was to take a job. The second largest group of principal activities in all years was "unemployed". But it should be noted that the category probably includes some housewives who are not seeking employment. The unemployed group has grown each year. The group who had "got married" or "had a baby" seems to have diminished steadily. To some extent that is because different sub-groups have been included, depending upon whether the girls who left school in order to get married or have a baby are taking care of their households and are not employed or seeking employment outside their homes, and what proportion classified themselves as unemployed. In spite of such categorization overlaps, the group has unmistakeably decreased. If we take only those who reported that they had had a baby and were taking care of it, over the three years we have 2.6 percent, 1.0 and 0.7. It does not seem reasonable to assume that, suddenly over these three years, the number of schoolgirls marrying has dropped drastically, nor that the number of babies born has declined so much. These were not all babies conceived out of wedlock. In many cases the report was quite explicit, "got married, had a baby" or "was already married, had a baby". The difference in the later years, we suggest, is that although the girl had had a baby she was seeking work or had gone back to work, and she reported this explicitly as her principal activity. The group who returned to formal educational programs experienced little change — in all years it forms about 5 to 6 percent. This provides some evidence for answering the second question (the number of dropouts returning to formal education), but we shall go into this in more detail later.

Using the estimated total Ontario dropout for 1974-75 of 47,762, and applying the percentages in the right hand column of the table on page 114 we have an estimated:

29,469	dropouts who are working
13,564	who are unemployed
2,579	who are taking formal courses of study
860	who are married and looking after their households (some of them have had babies)
1,290	engaged in a variety of other activities

Before we look in detail at these five sub-groups we shall analyse the statistics on current activity in our usual manner to see if there are clues to important relationships.

Activity by sex

There were 7538 dropouts in Ontario in 1974-75 for whom we have the current activity reported and sex (see table 30 and figure 16). In all cases there is a highly significant statistical relationship between what the dropout is now doing and his/her sex. Males are more likely to be working full-time than females. They are also more likely, if unemployed, to be travelling. Males represent 56.4 percent of this sub-sample, but they form 64.4 percent of the group which is working full-time and 64.3 of those who are unemployed and travelling. There are large numbers of males and females who are unemployed and looking for work (963:860), but it is the females who are over-represented (47.2 percent of this category although they are only 43.6 of the sub-sample). Girls are also more likely than boys to be the dropouts who are working part-time, or unemployed and just bumming around. Girls represent 94 percent of the dropouts who left school in order to get married and are looking after their households, or who have had a baby and are looking after it at home.* We had expected the females to be over-represented among the group returning to study, but not among the unemployed. Popular myth holds that it is easier for girls than boys from high school to get jobs; that more of what is learned in a secondary school program is useful for application in girls' (predominantly office-worker) jobs than is useful for the kind of unskilled work which male high school dropouts get. Later we shall look at the kinds of job the dropouts obtained. Here we merely report the finding about unemployment and suggest an explanation which is a personal opinion.

Over the period of economic expansion, with increased female participation in education and in the labour force, women, economically, have been making some noticeable, differentially favourable advances (i.e., gains at the expense of males, beyond what they would have obtained anyway from economic growth). It was the existence of these gains, but their shortfall from the expectations aroused, which gave rise to the latest round of feminism which is in the western world's historical tradition of women's suffrage, etc. Over the three years that we have been studying dropouts, Ontario has been moving into deeper and deeper levels of economic recession. Not depression, but economic stagnation, with little real economic growth, accompanied by inflation and loss of

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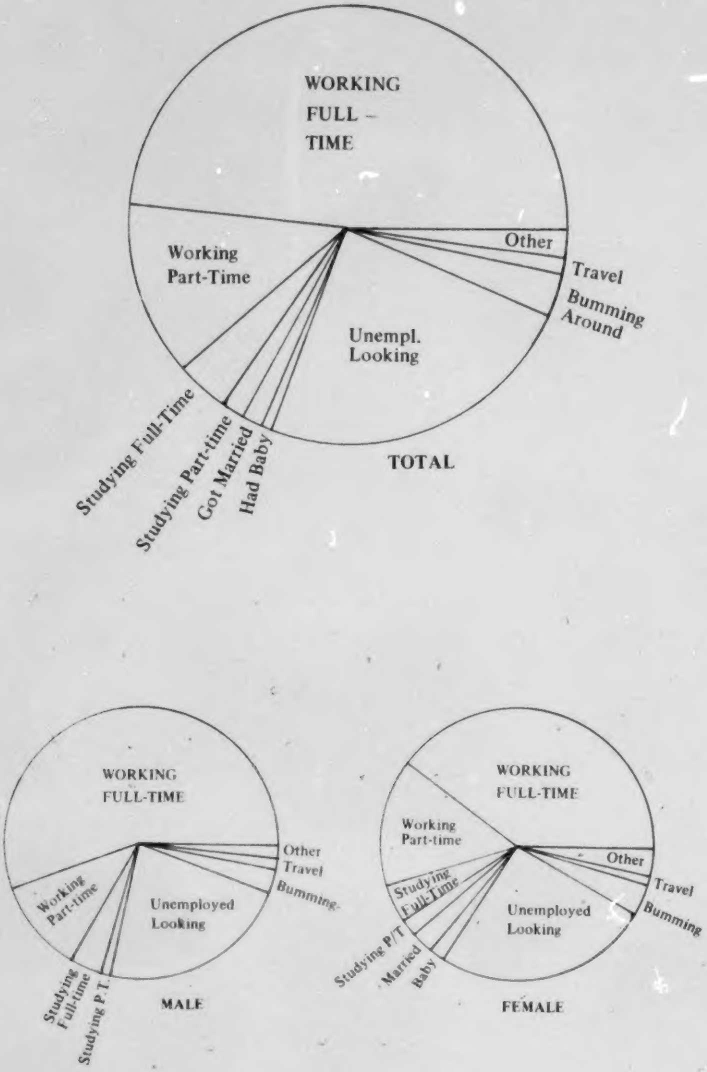
*We had expected them to be 100 percent, but eight males are coded in these categories, i.e., gave these as their principal current activity.

Figure 16 DROPOUTS – PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY BY SEX, 1974-75



real wages. During these years our unemployed dropouts have increased, proportionately, and it is our opinion that we shall go on seeing such an increase for a number of years. We shall have large youth cohorts coming on to the Ontario labour market for at least five more years. If we keep them in schools and colleges our education costs will rise.

If they leave schools and colleges to take jobs a large proportion will not keep the jobs for long. In any case, governments have demonstrated their desire to reduce expenditure in the public sector (the area on which their cutback will have a *direct* effect, because they control it). Moreover, to some extent, governments' increasingly high expenditure has been feeding inflation. In other words, governments wish to reduce the growth in their expenditure, and the private sector is not growing in a steady, healthy fashion. We do not seem to have created a sufficient number of *new* jobs to absorb these youth cohorts when they are ready to come on to the labour market (whether prematurely as dropouts or at the end of their education). In our opinion, in this competition women's recent economic gains will, to a very large extent, be lost, and we may expect female unemployment rates to rise more rapidly than male rates.

One other message is clear from this distribution of the dropouts' principal activities. If educational authorities wish to attract these youngsters back to school they will have to take some positive steps, and they must develop different policies for males and females because their rival activities differ. Perhaps if some part-time study/drop-in centre could be linked to part-time work, it might prove to be appropriate for about one-quarter of the dropout loss. Perhaps a variety of manpower training, given by schools; but in a less formal and more adult atmosphere than current secondary schools, would be the answer. Such centres could be established in one or two buildings of a board. In that way a unique atmosphere could be developed for the 'training' drop-in. Their programs could consist of some general education of the type given in a high school and some specific paid employment cooperatively managed with a local firm. At present manpower training programs (for which the federal government pays a large share of the costs) come under the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, are given in the CAATs, and are mainly intended for the adult unemployed. What is suggested here is some sort of a halfway house between manpower training and secondary school education, with students paid for part-time work and part-time study and payment geared to work and study success, almost in 'piece-work' fashion.

In the full sample of the 1973-74 survey (i.e., that which includes the grade 9s and 10s), an even higher proportion of dropouts reported their principal activity as "working full-time" (54.5 percent *v.* 48.7 in 1974-75). Again statistically the relationship between current activity and sex is highly significant. The 1973-74 finding was very similar to that of 1974-75: males are considerably over-represented among the dropouts who are working full-time. In that year males formed 59.0 percent of the sub-sample, 65.8 of those who were working. However, that year the females, who formed 41.0 percent of the sub-sample, were represented about as expected among the unemployed looking for work, but were over-represented among the other unemployed and those who were working part-time or who had returned to full-time study.

In summary: there does not seem to have been much shift in the dropouts' principal activity-by-sex over these three years, but the sex of those who were unemployed and looking for work should be noted. The males' proportion of this category was as follows:

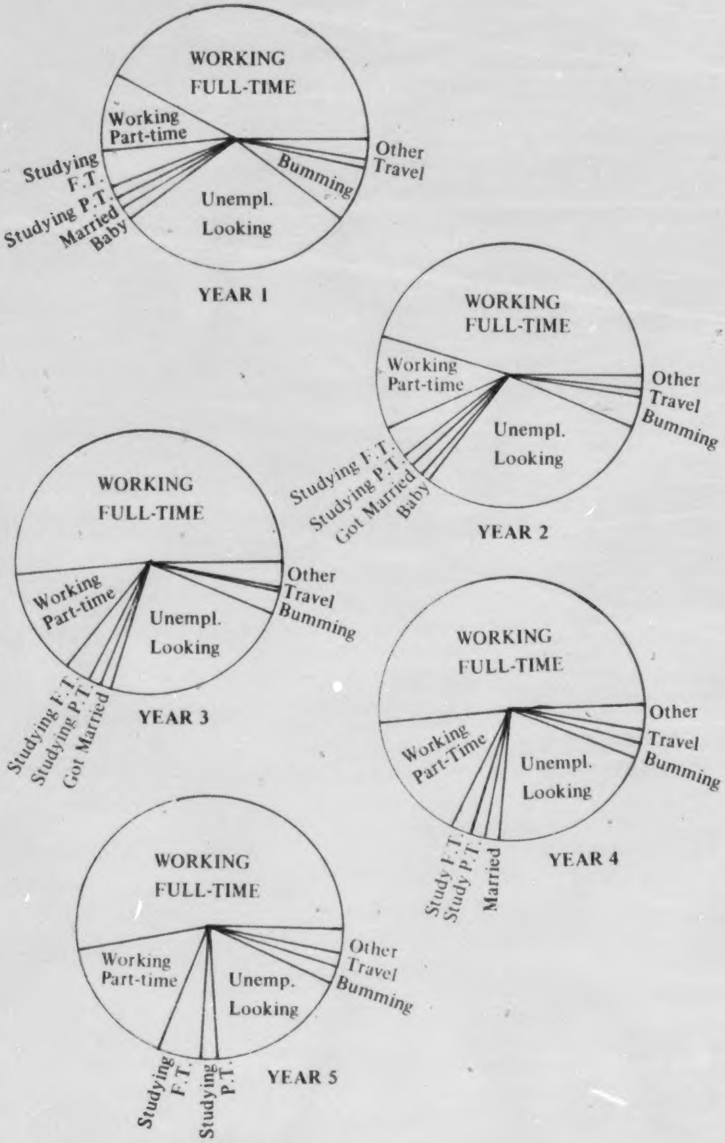
Unemployed-looking-for-work	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75
% males in category	51.2	58.1	52.8
N of category	121	44	1823
% males in sub-sample of question	57.4	59.0	56.4
N of sub-sample	1411	1612	7538

Males have been consistently under-represented in the category. Only in 1973-74 did they come close to what one would expect to find, given their proportion in the sub-sample. That year the total sample of the pilot study was heavily influenced by the inclusion of two big city boards. So perhaps the adverse employment prospects for female dropouts is true for the province as a whole but to a lesser degree in large cities.

Activity by year left

In 1974-75 there were 7273 respondents who reported at least one current activity, for whom the schools reported the grade they had left (see table 31 figure 17). The relationship between the distribution of these two variables is statistically highly significant. There is an almost unbroken progression — the higher the grade left, the greater the proportion of its dropouts who were working (42.1 per-

Figure 17 DROPOUTS – PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY BY YEAR, 1974-75



cent, 45.7, 51.4, 50.6, 53.2). The one slight upset to this general proposition is between grades 11 and 12. Over half the dropouts of the three upper grades were gainfully employed when they completed our questionnaires a month (or less) after leaving school. Those from grades 9 and 10 were not so fortunate.

The same is true of dropouts working part-time; the higher the grade the greater the proportion of dropouts from that grade who are working part-time (8.8 percent, 11.0, 13.1, 16.2, 15.8). Grades 12 and 13 are over-represented in this category, grades 9 and 10 under-represented, and there are about as many former grade 11 students as would be expected. This may be seen from the following percentage distributions:

First activity response	Year					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Working full-time	12.1	23.3	29.6	21.0	14.0	100.0
Working part-time	9.5	21.2	28.4	25.2	15.6	100.0
Total first activities	14.0	24.9	28.1	20.2	12.8	100.0

The reverse is true of those studying full-time, or unemployed and looking for work. Their percentage distributions are as follows:

First activity response	Year					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Studying full-time	23.8	23.4	22.7	13.2	16.8	100.0
Unemployed looking for work	17.1	29.5	27.1	17.2	9.1	100.0
Total first activities	14.0	24.9	28.1	20.2	12.8	100.0

In the former category the two extremes are over-represented; it is the dropouts from grade 9 and grade 13 who tend to return to full-time study, to try again. In the latter category the upper two grades are under-represented — i.e., dropouts from these grades are less likely to be unemployed. It is the dropouts from the lower years of secondary school who are less likely to be working and more likely to be unemployed. This finding holds true over all surveys, in so far as we can determine. If we compare only the dropouts from the three grades covered by all surveys we see the following percentage distributions:

		Year 3	
First activity response	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75
Working full-time	40.8	43.0	29.6
Total first activities	41.7	46.7	28.1

		Year 4	
First activity response	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75
Working full-time	38.7	34.1	21.2
Total first activities	38.6	33.2	20.5

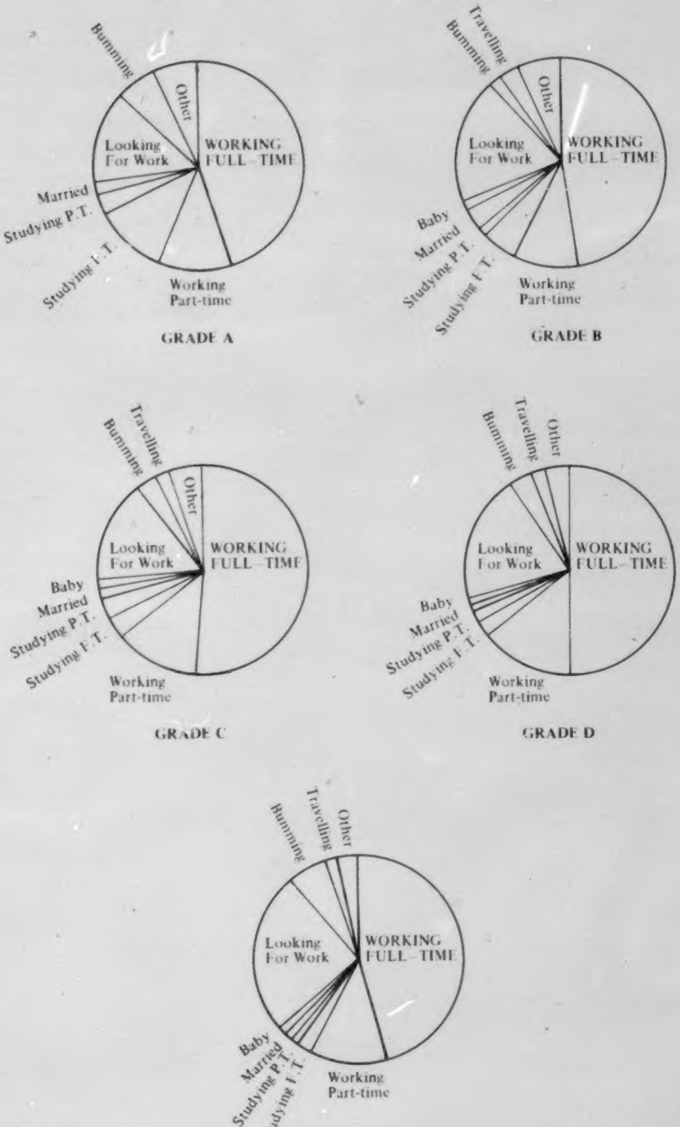
		Year 5	
First activity response	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75
Working full-time	20.5	22.9	13.7
Total first activities	19.7	20.1	12.7

The absolute numbers of 1972-73 and 1973-74 are lower, of course, because their samples were small. The proportionate values of 1973-74 and 1974-75 are lower, of course, because the total (100 percent) encompasses five grades instead of three. Nevertheless, it may be seen that, in the first two surveys the dropouts from year-3 are under-represented among those who were working when they completed the questionnaires. In 1974-75, when this year (grade 11) was *not* the lowest one polled, they were slightly more highly represented than their percentage of the sample warrants (and it was the two lower grades which were decidedly under-represented). This finding did not surprise us. It merely reinforces common knowledge. It is the least educated who find it hardest to compete on the labour market in Ontario. Even in the choice between employing a grade 9 or a grade 11 dropout, the former will lose.

Current first activity by achievement level

In 1974-75 there were 5467 students who reported at least one current activity for whom we had average marks reported (see figure 18 and table 32). The evidence which we discussed above suggests that employers favour dropouts from higher rather than lower grades, i.e. they take into account the intellectual quality of their

Figure 18 DROPOUTS – PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY BY ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL, 1974-75



GRADE A

GRADE B

GRADE C

GRADE D

GRADE F

prospective employees. Now, *academic* selections always taken into account not only the length of the candidate's schooling experience but also his ability to learn, as demonstrated by marks. These data indicate that employers do not use the latter as a criterion for selection. In the "working full-time" activity category we see the following percentage distribution by average marks:

First activity response	A	B	C	D	F	Total
Working full-time	1.4	8.9	31.5	34.0	24.2	100.0%
Total first activities	1.4	9.2	30.2	33.4	25.7	100.0%

Only the B and F students are under-represented. The C and D (who might be described as the 'average' and 'below average but not failing') are over-represented. This suggests that the employer's selection process weeds out the Fs, but is not greatly concerned with discriminating between other applicants.

It is gratifying to see that those who return to full-time study are the dropouts who had been better students academically. (This shows our bias, of course. Some may greatly deplore the dropout of the F student on the grounds that he has the greatest need for schooling in order to compensate for poor learning ability.) The following percentage distribution shows that the A and B students are over-represented among dropouts returning to formal study:

First activity response	A	B	C	D	F	Total
Studying full-time	4.8	19.7	28.6	30.6	16.3	100.0%
Total first activities	1.4	9.2	30.2	33.4	25.7	100.0%

Among those who are unemployed and looking for work we find that the As, Bs and Cs are all under-represented, the proportion of Ds is about the expected level and the Fs are really considerably over-represented. The percentage distributions are as follows:

First activity response	A	B	C	D	F	Total
Unemployed and looking for work	1.0	7.7	26.4	33.2	31.7	100.0%
Total first activities	1.4	9.2	30.2	33.4	25.7	100.0%

For comparison we present the 1973-74* percentage distributions on principal activity:

First activity response	A	B	C	D	F	Total
Working full-time	0.6	6.3	29.9	35.8	27.3	100.0%
Studying full-time	0.0	7.7	44.2	17.3	30.8	100.0%
Unemployed and looking for work	0.4	3.0	20.0	31.8	44.8	100.0%
Total first activities	0.7	6.2	27.4	33.7	32.0	100.0%

In that year there were few As in the sample and none had returned to full-time study. The representation of the Bs among the gainfully employed was about what would be expected, the Cs and Ds were decidedly over-represented, and the Fs under-represented. In other words the 1973-74 evidence reinforces that of 1974-75. Apparently employers do not choose dropouts who were 'failing' students, but they do not greatly discriminate between the others. In fact, they seem to favour what might be called the 'low average to average' applicant.

In summary: About two thirds of the students who dropped out of school were working when they filled in our questionnaires. Over these years the "unemployed looking for work" group has grown to almost three times its size. There is a difference, by sex, in what is likely to be the dropouts' first or principal activity. The girls seem to suffer unemployment more than the boys. Predictably girls form almost the entire group who are at home looking after their households and babies; they are also more likely to be the dropouts who have returned to formal study, whether on a full- time or part-time basis. The higher the grade left, the more likely the dropout will be gainfully employed. If the dropout was a failing student (average marks F) he is less likely to be employed than his fellow student. But apart from the failures, employers do not seem to discriminate greatly between applicants according to their school achievement levels. They are probably looking for other qualities than the intellectual ability to learn bookish information quickly. Actually it is the average to low average dropouts (Cs and Ds) who most frequently are gainfully employed.

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*These include grades 9 and 10

THE OPEN ENDED ACTIVITIES

In 1974-75 there were 3515 responses written-in on the questionnaire in reply to the query about current activities. For the most part they were descriptions of the type of work being done, and they are reported in the section in which we discuss the dropouts' work experience (using this material and that of the interviews). There were also some 608 written-in responses describing the type of study being undertaken (which are discussed in the study section later in this chapter). In addition there were 294 "other" activities reported, which do not fit the general categories. We shall describe them briefly here (see table 33).

The 294 responses we grouped into 13 activity categories and a residual 'other'. Some of them might well be included in the activity categories which we had specified, but the dropout (aware of the details of his particular case) obviously felt that the specified category did not quite apply. For example, those who were "taking care of home", or " staying at home", are probably very similar to those who had "got married and were taking care of their households". Both are homemakers, although many of the former seem to be taking care of the parental home rather than their own households. The "having baby/waiting for birth of baby" group was also specified, really, as were those who were "travelling" (although, presumably, these youngsters reject the notion that they are unemployed and hence travelling).

The additional categories which were revealed by the written-in responses were the "self employed", "armed forces", "ill", "convalescent", "moving/transferring" and "jail". The group which report that they are "just living" do not seem to be doing anything else, i.e., what one person describes as "staying home" another reports as "just living".

In 1973-74 there were 81 "other" responses reported (71 if we delete the questionnaires of the dropouts from grades 9 and 10). They were distributed as follows: 13 had become apprentices, 15 were ill, 3 were self employed (i.e., had started some sort of business), 3 were studying by correspondence courses, 4 were travelling, 18 were in the armed forces, 12 had returned to school, 12 were just staying at home, and 11 reported a variety of other activities. Like the written-in responses of the 1974-75 survey most of these could have been fitted into one of the specified categories. Nevertheless we shall describe them briefly.

Armed Forces

Ten of the 1972-73 dropouts (all male) had gone to the armed forces. The eighteen of the 1973-74 survey were probably all males too; for one we do not know sex. In the 1974-75 sample there were six, five males and one female. We know the school year of twenty-six who left to join the armed forces in 1973-74, eight were from grade 11, six from grade 12 and twelve from grade 13. That is an over-representation of the grade 11s. In 1974-75 there were two who had left grade 10, three from 11 and one from 13. In 1973-74 one of these students left with a B average, three were Cs, seven Ds and one F. This does not say much for the academic selection of our armed forces. In 1974-75 one of these students left with a B average, one was a C, one an F; for the others no marks were reported.

Apprentices

This category we used in the 1973-74 pilot study but not in 1974-75. In the latter year the apprentices were tabulated with the 'studying' group. There is some similarity between those who are studying in a trade school and those who are apprentices. In the 1973-74 survey the trade school category were included with the 'studying' group. These were dropouts who either wrote in the name of the school or wrote 'trade school' on their questionnaires. They are discussed elsewhere. Nine of the thirteen apprentices of 1973-74 were males, four were females. One had left grade 9, one grade 10, five grade 11, and six grade 12. For four of the apprentices we did not receive an average mark; one of others was an A student, two were Bs, four were Cs, one D and one F.

Self employed

In 1973-74 there were three dropout males who had their 'own business'. In 1974-75 there were two, both females. In 1973-74 one had left grade 10 and two grade 11. In 1974-75 one had left grade 9, the other grade 13. In 1973-74 two had had an average mark of C, one of D. In 1974-75 one was failing (F) and for the other no mark was reported.

Ill

Here the girls outnumber the boys. In 1973-74 there were nine females to five males in this category, with one other whose sex is unknown. In that year they had left all years of secondary school except grade 13. For one we do not know the grade; among the others, one (each) came from grades 9 and 10, ten from grade 11, two from grade 12. In 1974-75 five were from grade 9, thirteen from grade 10, eleven from 11, ten from 12, and three from 13. In 1973-74 six of the nine for whom we have marks were failing students (Fs), one had a B average and two were Ds. In 1974-75 there were marks for only twenty-nine of the forty-six; there was one A student, nine Bs, eight Cs, seven Ds and four Fs.

Convalescing

This category we included only in 1974-75; there were twenty — ten boys and ten girls. Two were from grade 9, three (each) from 10 and 11, six from 12 and six from 13. One of the convalescents had been an A student, two were Bs, four were Cs, three Ds and two Fs.

Jail

Each year we have had a few dropouts who were in jail or some other form of detention when they received our questionnaires. We did not inquire into their offences. None of these students was interviewed. There were three in 1974-75. All were males. Two were from grade 10, one from 12.

In summary: The "other" activity responses written-in on questionnaires in the three surveys represent only a very small number of dropouts. In the pilot studies their chief value was in helping us refine the coding of the categories specified on the questionnaire, Each year we found that most of the 'write-ins' were merely rewording one of the specified categories. They have some value in that open-ended questions give the respondent the opportunity to express things in his own words, and they do record the very small "other" categories which cannot all be specified because of space.

Using the estimated Ontario figure for 1974-75 of 47,762, we estimated the number of dropouts there would be in the special categories which have been described. There were 20,027 dropouts reported by our schools. The 294 "other" principal activities represent 1.47 percent of the sample, which, applied to the estimated total, gives us 702. That is, there would be an estimated 702 dropouts engaged in such activities. There would be four or five self employed and fifteen would be in the armed forces. There would be 118 who left because of illness, 51 would be convalescing, 166 doing odd jobs and 8 in jail.

Before leaving discussion of the principal activities, and dealing with the total reported activities according to a few main types, there are two pieces of analysis to be included in this section: first activities by main type, and a comparison of the activities, by sex, according to the month the dropout left school.

First activities (grouped by main type) by sex

Grouping the nine specified activity categories into four — working, studying, unemployed and other — provides a quick observation of the large questionnaire sample, which may then be set against the more detailed responses of the smaller interview sample which is reported below under the headings working, unemployed, returned to school and entered some other educational institution.

Two-thirds of the males were working when they filled in our 1974-75 questionnaires, less than 5 percent were studying (somewhere, not necessarily in their former school), about 27 percent were unemployed (see table 34). In the 1973-74 survey the males who were unemployed had represented only 19 percent of the male respondents. A smaller proportion of the females were working when they completed the 1974-75 questionnaires, but the number was still sizeable (1801, 54.8 percent of the female respondents); over 6 percent were studying and almost 31 percent were unemployed. In the 1973-74 survey the unemployed female dropouts had also, proportionately, exceeded the males, but not to the same extent (20.3 percent *v.* 19.0; in 1974-75 30.9 *v.* 26.7).

First activities (grouped by main type) by year left

In 1974-75 the proportion of the dropouts who were working when they filled out our questionnaires was directly related to the school grade they had left — the higher the grade the larger the proportion employed (see table 35). The percentages range from about 51 percent of the grade 9s to 69 percent of the grade 13s. The studying group represents between 4 and 5 percent of the dropouts of the three middle grades and around the 7 to 7.5 level for those from grade 9 or grade 13. The unemployed reduce steadily from over one third of the grade 9 dropouts (37.4 percent) to about one-fifth of those leaving grade 13 (21.3).

In 1973-74 about two-thirds of the grade 11 dropouts had been working as compared with 64.5 percent the following year, and the contrast in the two higher grades was even greater (70.4 percent *v.* 66.8 for grade 12s and 79.3 percent *v.* 69.0 for the grade 13s). That year the studying group was also proportionately larger: 6.5 percent *v.* 4.3 for the grade 11s, 5.6 *v.* 4.2 the grade 12s and 7.4 *v.* 6.8 the grade 13s. It is the unemployed who were proportionately fewer in the earlier years. This is not an *apparent* change, the effect of including the 9s and 10s in the 1974-75 survey and excluding them for all but two boards in 1973-74. This is a comparison within the grade. In the two years, unemployed dropouts as a percentage of those reporting a first (or principal) activity were as follows: 22.3 percent *v.* 26.7 of the grade 11s, 20.0 *v.* 23.9 of the grade 12s and 12.2 *v.* 21.3 of the grade 13s.

First activities (grouped by main type) by achievement level

The proportion which the 1974-75 working dropouts represent of an achievement level peaks with the Cs (see table 36). Given their representation in the sub-sample, the Cs are slightly over-represented among those working and so are the Ds (31.4 percent *v.* 30.2 and 34.2 *v.* 33.5); the Bs are about what one would expect, and the As and Fs are under-represented. The working dropouts represent between 58 percent and 66 percent of an achievement category, the lesser percentage being the proportion of As and Fs found to be working, the higher one the proportion of Cs. The non working 'A' achievement dropouts are among those studying rather than among the unemployed. The non working Fs on the other hand, are more commonly among the unemployed. The studying group represents between 3 percent and 12 percent of the dropouts, in different achievement classes; the higher the average mark, the higher the proportion of dropouts who return to school or to some other form of study. The proportion of the A, B and C level dropouts who were unemployed was very similar, 23 to 24.5 percent. It rises steeply for the D and F grade dropouts, to 28.3 and then 35.3 percent.

Using only the figures of the upper three grades, the 1973-74 As and Cs were represented about as expected among the working dropouts, the Bs and Ds were over-represented, the Fs (as in 1974-75) were underprepresented. That year the working-dropouts ranged from 64 percent to 77 percent of an achievement category — the lesser figure being the proportion of Fs who were employed, the higher one the proportion of Bs. The studying-dropouts in 1973-74 represented between 3 percent and 9 percent of an achievement category, but there were no A level dropouts studying. In that year unemployed-dropouts represented between 9 and 29 percent of an achievement category, the latter being the Fs and the former the Bs.

Grouped activities by month the dropout occurred and rank order of the activity

Although working was the main activity given by most students, many reported that they were also studying part-time. Some of the girls had married and were looking after their households, or were looking after their babies, and were also working part-time. Moreover, since the incidence of dropping out is not even by month, and the timing of the dropout decision seems to vary according to the sex of the student, we thought it would be useful to analyse the data in such a manner as to highlight some of these factors. The distribution of the males who were working (full-time and part-time), by the month they left school and the rank order of reported activity, is given below. The figures in brackets represent part-time; the total possible is the number of dropouts that month; i.e., if all dropouts had been found to be working full-time that would be the figure.

				Total		Total possible	
Month left	First activity	Second	Third	No.	%	No.	%
Sept.	227 (34)	0 (1)	0 (0)	227 (35)	9.6	408	8.7
Oct.	607 (78)	0 (3)	1 (1)	608 (82)	25.6	1091	23.2
Nov.	354 (91)	0 (2)	1 (0)	355 (93)	15.0	738	15.7
Dec.	144 (38)	0 (0)	0 (0)	144 (38)	6.1	296	6.3
Jan.	190 (49)	1 (1)	0 (0)	191 (50)	8.0	438	9.3
Feb.	229 (54)	0 (1)	0 (0)	229 (55)	9.7	488	10.4
Mar.	146 (31)	0 (1)	0 (0)	146 (32)	6.2	309	6.6
Apr.	216 (58)	0 (0)	0 (0)	216 (58)	9.1	482	10.3
May	232 (34)	0 (0)	0 (0)	232 (34)	9.8	399	8.5
June	21 (6)	1 (0)	0 (0)	22 (6)	0.9	46	1.0
Total	2366 (473)	2 (9)	2 (1)	2370 (483)	100.0	4695	100.0
N =	4249	420	26	4695			

For the females the comparable distributions were as follows:

Month left	First activity	Second	Third	Total No.	Total %	Total Possible No.	Total Possible %
Sept	165 (26)	2 (1)	0 (0)	167 (27)	12.7	376	10.3
Oct.	309 (105)	1 (5)	0 (2)	310 (112)	23.6	784	21.4
Nov.	172 (86)	0 (0)	0 (1)	172 (87)	13.1	532	14.5
Dec.	84 (36)	0 (1)	0 (0)	84 (37)	6.4	225	6.1
Jan.	137 (66)	0 (1)	0 (0)	137 (67)	10.5	428	11.7
Feb.	123 (50)	0 (1)	0 (0)	123 (51)	9.4	405	11.0
Mar.	82 (38)	0 (0)	0 (1)	82 (39)	6.3	264	7.2
Apr.	112 (44)	0 (0)	0 (0)	112 (44)	8.5	330	9.0
May	114 (40)	0 (0)	0 (0)	114 (40)	8.7	291	7.9
June	10 (4)	0 (0).	0 (0)	10 (4)	0.8	32	0.9
Total	1308 (495)	3 (9)	0 (4)	1311 (508)	100.0	3667	100.0
N =	3288	355	24	3667			

If we compare the total columns for males and females we note that the females leaving in October and the males leaving that month represent about a quarter of the total leaving to take full-time employment. The males were slightly higher that month, 25.6 *v.* 23.6 percent. In September it was the females who left to take jobs more frequenlty (12.7 percent of the total working dropouts *v.* 9.6). The female percentage was also somewhat higher in January. But the interesting comparison is shown by the two percentage columns on the right. The first is the percentage which that month's full-time working-dropouts represent of the year's total. The second is the percentage which the month's dropouts-by-first-activity represent of the total dropouts in this sub-sample. Note that, with one exception, the pattern of the males and females is the same. The exception is the month of December. In September, October and May the proportion which that month's working dropouts represents of the total drop-outs who are working exceeds the proportion which that month's loss represents of the total loss. In other words, a larger than expected number of the dropouts who left the school in September, October and May are working. This is true for both the males and females. If the dropouts leave school in these months there is a higher than expected probability that when they are contacted, shortly after leaving school, they will be found to be working. For the females, the December percentage of total working dropouts also exceeds the percentage of that month's dropouts as a proportion of total female dropouts in the year. But this is not true of the males.

In view of the finding, reported in chapter 2, that the pattern of dropping out by month differs for males and females — and our attempt to explain it in terms of dropping out when work is available — we did not expect to see female and male working-dropouts in the same pattern distribution by month. These data suggest that the difference in the overall dropout loss, by month by sex, is *not* due to whether students leave school in certain months *because* they are likely to obtain work.

We next looked at the distribution of first and other activities by sex for the unemployed (three categories combined: unemployed looking for work, unemployed travelling, unemployed just bumming around). The males' distributions are shown below and the females' on the next page.

Month left	First activity	Second	Third	Total No.	Total %	Total Possible No.	Total Possible %
Sept.	7	5	0	12	12.8	408	8.7
Oct.	18	5	0	23	24.5	1091	23.2
Nov.	5	4	0	9	9.6	738	15.7
Dec.	6	1	1	8	8.5	296	6.3
Jan.	6	2	1	9	9.6	438	9.3
Feb.	4	2	0	6	6.4	488	10.4
Mar.	4	0	0	4	4.2	309	6.6
Apr.	11	4	1	16	17.0	482	10.3
May	5	1	0	6	6.4	399	8.5
June	1	0	0	1	1.0	46	1.0
Total	67	24	3	94	100.0	4695	100.0
N =	4249	420	26	4695			

Here the pattern for the females differs considerably from that of the males. For both, September's proportion of the unemployed-dropouts is higher than September's proportion of dropouts generally. But for the males the October, December, January and April proportions of unemployed-dropouts are also higher. For the females this is not true for October, but it is for November; not true for December but it is for January and February, and not true for April. If the unemployed-dropouts were

The females' distributions were as follows:

Month left	First activity	Second	Third	Total No.	Total %	Total Possible No.	Total Possible %
Sept.	15	9	2	26	13.0	376	10.3
Oct.	29	6	0	35	17.5	784	21.4
Nov.	28	2	0	30	15.0	532	14.5
Dec.	7	3	0	10	5.0	225	6.1
Jan.	23	8	0	31	15.5	428	11.7
Feb.	16	5	1	22	11.0	405	11.0
Mar.	19	2	1	22	11.0	264	7.2
Apr.	10	0	0	10	5.0	330	9.0
May	9	4	0	13	6.5	291	7.9
June	1	0	0	1	0.5	32	0.9
Total	157	39	4	200	100.0	3667	100.0
N =	3288	355	24	3667			

spread over the year in the same proportion as the total dropout flow leaves the schools, we would have identical percentages in the two columns on the right.

The last distribution to be checked relates to the dropouts who return to full-time study, whether in school or elsewhere. Educational institutions are rigidly structured. Students cannot wander in and start programs whenever they please, without paying a considerable penalty in make-up adjustment. The school, on the other hand, is required by law to admit a student within the appropriate ages. Other educational institutions do not operate under such a constraint. They have an admission selection and they can require an acceptable student to wait until the next term (or the next year) for admission. Therefore we would not expect the pattern by month of exit for dropouts found to be studying, to be identical with the pattern for those who are working — not, that is, if the decision to drop out was premeditated and linked to study plans and knowledge of the regulations of the academic institution.

The males' distributions on study were as follows (the figures in brackets are for part-time study):

Month	First			Total		Total possible	
left	activity	Second	Third	No.	%	No.	%
Sept.	25 (6)	15 (14)	0 (0)	40 (20)	16.7	408	8.7
Oct.	37 (12)	23 (42)	0 (1)	60 (54)	25.1	1091	23.2
Nov.	17 (7)	12 (18)	0 (0)	29 (25)	12.1	738	15.7
Dec.	10 (3)	5 (6)	0 (0)	15 (9)	6.3	296	6.3
Jan.	13 (7)	9 (18)	0 (0)	22 (25)	9.2	438	9.3
Feb.	18 (7)	9 (21)	0 (0)	27 (28)	11.3	488	10.4
Mar.	10 (2)	2 (8)	0 (0)	12 (10)	5.0	309	6.6
Apr.	7 (2)	8 (10)	0 (0)	15 (12)	6.3	482	10.3
May	11 (1)	5 (10)	0 (0)	16 (11)	6.7	399	8.5
June	2 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)	3 (0)	1.3	46	1.0
Total	150 (47)	89 (147)	0 (1)	239 (195)	100.0	4695	100.0
N =	4249	420	26	4695			

The females' distributions were as follows:

Month	First			Total		Total possible	
left	activity	Second	Third	No.	%	No.	%
Sept.	26 (10)	8 (25)	0 (1)	34 (36)	19.9	376	10.3
Oct.	24 (12)	6 (38)	0 (1)	30 (51)	17.6	784	21.4
Nov.	20 (14)	5 (19)	0 (1)	25 (34)	14.6	532	14.5
Dec.	7 (2)	2 (3)	0 (0)	9 (5)	5.3	225	6.1
Jan.	28 (9)	3 (17)	0 (0)	31 (26)	18.1	428	11.7
Feb.	9 (8)	2 (15)	0 (1)	11 (24)	6.4	405	11.0
Mar.	7 (3)	1 (7)	0 (0)	8 (10)	4.7	264	7.2
Apr.	11 (5)	3 (8)	0 (0)	14 (13)	8.2	330	9.0
May	4 (4)	1 (3)	0 (0)	5 (7)	2.9	291	7.9
June	3 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)	4 (1)	2.3	32	0.9
Total	139 (67)	32 (136)	0 (4)	171 (207)	100.0	3667	100.0
N =	3288	355	24	3667			

For the male dropouts who were studying the months of September, October and February show a percentage exceeding that month's share of the total dropouts. For those who left in June there was also a slight excess over what might be expected. The females' pattern differs. In June the excess was larger; this was also true of those leaving in September, but not October. November's proportion was virtually identical to the month's proportionate share of the total dropout loss; December's was less (rather than virtually identical, as in the case of the males); January's exceeded, but February's did not (the males were reversed). In the case of those who were studying (both sexes) we would expect to find that the month of dropout tended to coincide with the beginning of academic terms — that is, the student dropped out of one study institution and into another in time to avoid paying too heavy a penalty of disruption. We expected that the dropout males who were studying would be found to have left school heavily in September and October. But these are heavy dropout months anyway, and we found that the unemployed and employed males also had left frequently in these months. This was not the case with the female dropouts. All (whatever their current activities), drop out frequently in September. But only the female employed-dropouts follow the males' pattern for October. By December/January the males and females were running in reverse in most cases — i.e., if the males were in excess one month the females would be in the other. This was also the case in March/April. We cannot explain this. It seems to arise largely because of the non-working dropout groups.

The month a student is likely to drop out of secondary school is not a matter of indifference to educational authorities. Schools draw their annual grant income in three installments related to the enrollment of the term. The dropout flow throughout the year causes considerable staffing imbalance between size of classes and staffing of schools. The better we are able to predict the dropout flow the more likely we can help school systems cope with the problems it creates. The month of dropping out is not unrelated to the 'destination' of the student (i.e., what he/she reports as the main current activity when contacted shortly after leaving the school); nor is it unrelated to the first or main reason for leaving school. However, if we expect to be able to predict the exit flow and destination by month we shall need to know much more about the forces driving these students than we do at present.

Since the discussion which follows is based on the total number of activities reported (whether as a main activity or an auxiliary one) the reader should first look at figure 19 (p. 138) noting its differences from figure 15 (p. 113). The inclusion of the second and third (part-time or auxiliary) activities does not change the picture in essence but it has the effect of slightly reducing the "working full-time" group and increasing the "unemployed looking for work" group. Total activities mean just that, the total number of times the activity was mentioned.

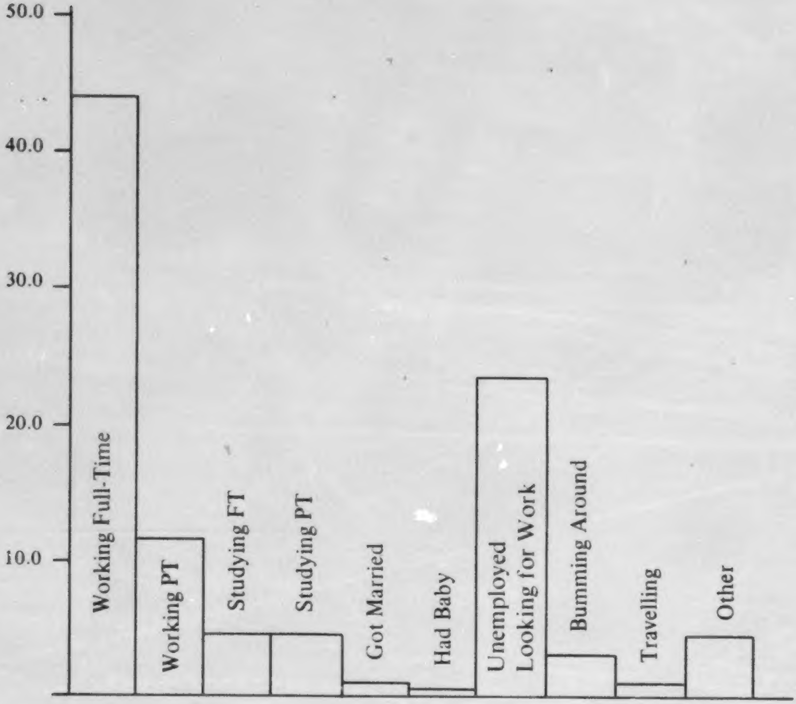
THE WORKING DROPOUTS

Taking all those who reported in 1974-75 that they were working, whatever the rank order assigned to that activity, and cross classifying those for whom we know the sex, year left or achievement level, we have the following:

Activity response	Male	Female	Total
Working full-time	2370	1311	3681
Working part-time	480	508	988
Total	2850	1819	4669

Activity response	Year 1	2	3	4	5	Total
Working full-time	429	827	1049	744	496	3545
Working part-time	90	200	268	238	147	943
Total	519	1027	1317	982	643	4488

Figure 19 DROPOUTS – TOTAL ACTIVITIES, 1974-75



Activity response	A	B	C	D	F	Total
Working full-time	37	245	861	927	685	2728
Working part-time	8	74	235	257	172	746
Total	45	319	1096	1184	830	3474

This is the group we are describing when we discuss the working-dropouts as defined by the questionnaires.

If they were working, dropouts were asked to write in the name of the employer and the type of work done. From the combined information, albeit brief (sometimes one or two-word answers), we classified the jobs as to status using the Census of Canada classification codes.

Total working dropouts by sex

There were 3515 dropouts, for whom we know sex, who provided some sort of job description; 2.3 percent were employed as proprietors or at a managerial, professional or technical level; 9.7 were doing clerical work; 11.4 were in sales; 19.1 had jobs in service or recreation occupations, 2.9 in transportation or communications, 9.4 in craft or factory production processes; 8.6 were general labourers or unskilled workers and 36.6 percent had other types of employment or jobs which we could not classify (see table 37). For comparison with those reported in more detail by dropouts who were interviewed see page 142. The females were somewhat over-represented among those doing clerical, sales, service and recreation work. The professional, etc. group is not large (80 reported) but it is not likely to be accurate. There are virtually no jobs of a really professional or technical level that a high school dropout is likely to obtain, and there are few managerial appointments open to them, except perhaps managing small enterprizes or the family business. In all occupational self-reporting there is a tendency to inflate one's status and this has probably occurred. There is also likely to be some coding misinterpretation. The status inflation was even more marked among the interviewed dropouts where the managerial, professional and technical group represent 3.9 percent of those employed. However, the job descriptions show that we cannot discount all reports of employment at this level. There are professional level jobs of an artistic or performing nature (i.e., in sport, in the visual or performing arts, in writing for journalism or advertising) which depend more upon talent than upon training. The males, as we expected, were found disproportionately among those in transport and communication occupations, factory workers and general labourers.

Total working dropouts by year of school left

There were 3395 dropouts for whom we know the grade left, who provided us with job descriptions (see table 38).

There seems to be under-representation of the dropouts from grades 9, 10 and 11 among those employed in professional, clerical and sales occupations, and over-representation of the ones from grades 12 and 13. For example:

	Year					
Occupation	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Professional	2.7	17.8	20.5	30.1	28.8	100.0%
Clerical	4.6	13.3	26.5	30.6	25.0	100.0%
Sales	10.9	17.4	28.6	23.1	20.0	100.0%
Total sub-sample	10.6	22.1	29.9	22.5	14.8	100.0%
Compare with the distribution of:						
General labour	15.1	27.4	28.1	19.2	10.3	100.0%

However the student ranks his work, whether as his first, second or third activity, full-time or part-time, the higher the grade left the more likely that his job will have a higher status.

Total working dropouts by achievement level

In 1974-75 there were 2588 dropouts, for whom we had an average achievement mark, who provided us with job labels or descriptions. There was a highly significant statistical relationship between the grade a student dropped out of and the status of the job he reported, but the relationship between the level of school marks achieved and the job obtained is much less apparent, it is statistically weak. It is the C level dropouts who are consistently over-represented in the higher status jobs and considerably under-represented among the general labourers. For example:

Occupation	A	B	C	D	F	Total
Professional	0.0	14.8	35.2	31.5	18.5	100.0%
Clerical	3.0	14.2	35.3	27.2	20.3	100.0%
Sales	1.0	8.5	35.6	35.6	19.3	100.0%
Total sub-sample	1.2	9.2	32.7	34.2	22.6	100.0%
And:						
General labourers	1.7	11.1	27.7	37.4	22.1	100.0%
Total sub- sample	1.2	9.2	32.7	34.2	22.6	100.0%

DATA FROM THE INTERVIEWS OF THE WORKING- DROPOUTS

The largest number of interviewed students were found to be working — 207 of the 423 (53.7 percent). This is hardly surprising since leaving in order to take a job was the main reason given for dropping out of school. In order to place these data in their broader setting of the main sample we shall recap:

In 1974-75 there were 4707 respondents who replied to the question "What are you doing now?" by giving "working" as their frist activity. They represented 61.6 percent of the respondents to this question, 23.5 of the 1974-75 dropouts reported by our cooperating schools; 61.2 were males, 38.8 females; 11.6 percent had dropped out of grade 9, and from the higher grades 22.9, 29.3, 21.9 and 14.3; 1.3 percent had an A average achievement level, 9.1 were Bs, 31.5 Cs, 34.1 Ds and 24.0 Fs.

The interviews of the 207 working-dropouts started with the question:

Could you describe the kind of job you're doing now?

Two (males) would not answer the question; for one who was working at a service or recreation occupation sex was not recorded. The percentage distribution (according to the 1971 census occupational codes) of the remaining 204 is given below. The percentages in italics report the distribution by occupational status of the working-dropouts who wrote a job description on their questionnaires.

Occupational category	Male		Female		Column total			
	%		%		No.		%	
Managerial, professional and technical	62.5	*56.3*	37.5	*43.8*	8	*80*	3.9	*2.3*
Clerical	29.7	*25.0*	70.3	*75.0*	37	*340*	18.1	*9.7*
Sales	29.4	*42.6*	70.6	*57.4*	17	*399*	8.4	*11.4*
Service and recreation	30.8	*41.2*	69.2	*58.8*	39	*673*	19.1	*19.1*
Transport and communication	88.2	*79.6*	11.8	*20.4*	17	*103*	8.4	*2.9*
Craftsmen, factory and production process	76.0	*87.3*	24.0	*12.7*	50	*331*	24.5	*9.4*
Labourers	74.1	*88.0*	25.9	*12.0*	27	*301*	13.2	*8.6*
Primary and other	100.0	*69.0*	0.0	*31.0*	9	*1288*	4.4	*36.6*
Total	56.4	*59.8*	43.6	*40.2*			100.0	*100.0*
N =	115	*2102*	89	*1413*	204	*3515*		

Eight of the interviewed students had jobs of a professional, technical or managerial nature (and, as we mentioned above, these might well be of lesser status than described). About 18 percent had clerical-type jobs (almost three-quarters of them females) and another 8 percent sales-type jobs (over 70 percent of them females). Combined, about 26.5 percent had jobs which might be classified as white collar. If we group the service and recreation, transport and communication, craftsmen/factory, labourers, primary industries workers and "other" we have about 70 percent of the respondents. We might have tried to divide them into skilled, semiskilled, and unskilled but it seemed a meaningless distinction for these workers. High school dropouts have not had time to acquire skills (take trade school courses or complete an apprenticeship), so even if they report their work by use of a skilled occupational label (e.g., printer), questions about the job showed that they are unskilled assistants, used for odd jobs, cleaning up, making deliveries, etc. Even for many of the sales and clerical jobs it is clear that the girls must be considered unskilled. Although their job titles have white-collar status they are paid below the general level of white-collar jobs. Nevertheless, those female dropouts who find jobs tend to 'fall on their feet', so to speak, somewhat better than their male counterparts — although they are not as well paid they probably enjoy more pleasant work conditions and they (nominally) enter occupations of higher status.

The second question of this schedule asked:

Did you have the job before you left school?

There were 203 replies. Almost one-third of the dropouts had the job before they left school; another 25 percent found it shortly after leaving; i.e., well over half of those working when they were interviewed had settled quickly into jobs and were enjoying fairly steady employment. But for 86 some time had elapsed before they found their current job; 21 had looked "for a long time", 65 had had other jobs before this one. Twenty-three working-dropouts reported the number of months they had been looking for a job, and 65 reported the number of jobs they had had before the current one (since they had dropped out of school). Nine had looked between one and three months before they found a job; two between four and six months; four between ten and twelve; five over a year.* (This sample was interviewed in summer and fall 1975, i.e., not less than four months after dropping out of school and not more than fourteen.) Among those 23 respondents thirteen were males, nine were females and for one sex was not recorded.

The 65 who reported that they had already had more than one job represent 31.4 percent of the interviewed working-dropouts.** The number of jobs held was as follows: 32 had had one other job than the current one, 18 had had two, 5 three, 7 four, 3 five or more. (These are working-dropouts. They do not include those listed under "other", who reported that they had never been employed and had only done odd jobs since they left school.) The males of this sub-sample show greater job stability than the females. The group having only one job (the current one) represents 68.6 percent of the sub-sample but 70.9 percent of the males were in this category and only 65.2 of the females. On the other hand the few students who had had a great many jobs were males.

The third question asked was:

How long have you had your present job?

The largest group had had their jobs for less than three months (30 percent), and the proportion of the sample dropped steadily the greater the number of months (see table 40). Thus 25 percent had

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*These were working-dropouts. The period spent looking for work by the unemployed-dropouts was higher.

**In other words 142 had had only one job (their current one) since leaving school.

had the job between four and six months, 22 percent between seven and nine, 11 percent between ten and twelve, and 12 percent over a year. Many of the youngsters, of course, could not have had the jobs for the longer periods because they were interviewed too soon after they dropped out of school. To assess what stability these lengths of employment represent we cross classified the date of dropping out by the length of time the current job was held.

We found that the relationship between the length of time working, and the date they left school, was not statistically significant — which is very interesting. Common sense suggests that the length of time one has held one's current job is directly related to the length of time one *could* hold it (i.e., the length of time one has been available for employment), particularly for new young entrants to the labour force. Yet this non-significance states, in effect, that there is no demonstrable systematic relationship between the date the youngster left school and the length of time he has held his current job. For example, if one knows the date the dropouts have left school, the distribution of the total working-dropouts over the five categories of job-holding-by-length-of-time and a time series of data, one is still not likely to be able to predict with reasonable accuracy the estimated numbers in each category. This finding suggests that one would achieve the same accuracy by simply flipping dice to arrive at the numbers. This is disappointing. Two questions arise: (1) What is the accuracy (veracity) of these interview reports? (2) What does this evidence suggest about the job stability of dropouts?

First let us look at the question of veracity:

Of the students who reported that they had held their jobs between one and three months there were nine who had left school as late as May 1975, five in April and five in March. Since almost all the 1974-75 dropout interviewing took place in late summer and fall 1975, these reports are probably true. Of the students who said they had held their jobs for between four and six months, two had dropped out as late as June, and eight as late as May 1975. It is possible for the June ones to have been employed for as long as six months only if they obtained their jobs as soon as they left school, because the interviews straggled on into January 1976, as we added a few to try to improve the numbers from different boards. So this set of data is acceptable. Of the students who had held their jobs between seven and nine months one had dropped out in June, and six in May. The June one is barely possible if he/she was interviewed in

January, had obtained the job immediately on leaving school and had held only that job.

Of the students who had held their job between ten and twelve months, one (each) had dropped out in May and April 1975. This cannot be. Let us suppose that they came into the lower range of the category (10 months). In order to drop out in May, and work ten months, they would have had to be interviewed in March 1976; to drop out in April they would have had to be interviewed in February 1976. The interviewing had stopped by that time. So in at least two instances either (a) students misunderstood the question or misinformed the interviewer, of (b) the interviewer has made a mistake in recording the answer, or (c) the coder coded the answer incorrectly. Of the students who had held their jobs for more than twelve months there was one who had dropped out in June 1975, two in May, two in April, one in March and one in February — i.e., there are seven whose reports are likely to be wrong.

There are several possible explanations, e.g., the student now has a job, which he has held since he dropped out, which he left school to take, and which he had formerly held on a part-time basis. It was a satisfactory job (even a good one); he left school *because* it was offered to him full-time. And he gave the interviewer the total time he has held the job, not the period since dropout that he has held it full-time. At the time of the interview, the interviewers did not have with them the dropouts' questionnaires showing the month of dropping out, nor did they have the schools' lists showing the month of leaving, so they would not notice the time discrepancy.

Therefore, it would be well to take the reports of long employment (10 to 12 months and 12+ months at the current job) with a grain of salt. The likelihood is that the student is exaggerating. The other details about the length of current employment look quite plausible.

Now let us look at the question of employment stability: if the student had held the current job for a fairly long portion of the time he could have held it, we should find (for example) that the numbers are high for students who left early in the academic year 1974-75 and reported working for 7 to 9 months. The numbers should also be high for students who left school towards the end of the academic year and reported working for 1 to 6 months. By and large this is the case (see table 40), but there are many anomalies.

In the September 1974 dropout cohort, for example, the largest absolute figure was in the lowest job-time category. When checking the proportion of each job-time category which a given monthly cohort of dropouts represented, we would expect that the longer the job-time category the greater the proportion of its members from an early monthly cohort, Thus 31.8 percent of the 22 who had held their job for 10-12 months had dropped out as early as September 1974 and 36.4 percent had dropped out in October 1974 (which seeems reasonable). But the second highest proportion of the September cohort (17.7 percent) was to be found in the 1-3 months job-time category, and the October cohort had a very high proportion in the second to smallest job-time category (15.7 percent). Of the November 1974 dropout cohort, who had been available for employment between nine and thirteen months when interviewed, the largest number (12 of the 30) had held their current jobs only between one and three months. And they represented more than 19 percent of the shortest job-time category but only 20 percent of the longest job-time category (5 of the 25), and less of the categories in between. Similarly, half of the February and March 1975 dropout cohorts, who had been on the labour market between six and ten, or five and nine months when interviewed, were in the lowest job-time category (i.e., had held their current jobs only between 1-3 months).

In summary: From these data we would say that the employed dropouts exhibit decided characteristics of employment instability, but the data are few and are not entirely reliable. Unfortunately, we do not know of another survey with which they might be compared.

How did they get their jobs?

We had 197 replies. In the interview we provided for five possible answers and left space for an open-ended "other". There were 71 of the latter but the great majority of them are variant wordings of "applied". "Answered an ad" is the second most common answer if we ignore "other". When it includes the "other" it becomes the most common reply. The responses were as follows: The largest number of these dropouts answered an ad or applied directly to the company or employer (52.8 percent). The second largest group found their current jobs through a friend or relative (36.6 percent). Then 7.1 percent used Manpower, 2.0 used an employment agency and 1.5 had help from a guidance counsellor or teacher. In other words, for these youngsters obtaining employment rested crucially on 'connections' and their own initiative. The two official assistance agencies (Manpower and the school) do not show up as being of much importance in helping school dropouts get a job.

One of the best indicators of job status is salary or wages. So the dropouts were asked:

Do you mind telling me how much you earn each week, before deductions? You can round it if you wish.

There were 181 dropouts who revealed their wages; twenty-six did not answer the question. The largest single earnings category was $101-$125 per week (23 percent). Overall there were 109 (60 percent) who earned $125 per week or less (35 of them earned from $76-$100 and 32, $75 per week or less for working full-time). If we extend the category to include the next higher earnings group (i.e., up to $150 gross per week) we have 79 percent of the employed-dropouts.

The higher the wage the more likely it was a male than a female earning it. The males are under-represented until we get to the category $126-$150 per week and from then on they are over-represented. Twenty-four of the 34 working-dropouts earning $126-$150 were males, 13 of the 15 earning $151-$175 (87 percent); all of the 9 earning $176-$200, the 6 earning $201-$250 and the 8 earning over $250.

We cross classified the working-dropouts in the top six salary categories (i.e., above $100 per week) by the reported income of their families. There is no statistical significance between the distributions of the students' wages and their families' incomes. Nevertheless, we reasoned that it would be unlikely for a student to earn a very high personal weekly salary and report a very low family income, although it was quite conceivable for the reverse to be true, i.e., that he himself did not earn much but his family had a fairly high income — either because his parents were high earners or because his was one of several wages going into that family. It should be borne in mind that most of the dropouts still live at home with their parents. The data cannot prove the truth of the students' income and wage reports but at least they can let us see if they are mutually consistent. They are. There are no cases of family income of $125 per week (or equivalent monthly or annual sums), except for the few students earning the lowest salary category included here ($100 per week or less). If theirs was the sole or the main household support these are believable figures. Similarly three of the four dropouts with a family income of $125-$150 per week have reported personal wages of $101-$125 per week.

Half the students in the wage category $101-$125 per week come from families with a weekly income of more than $250. Obviously there are other wage earners in the family, and the student's is not the main support wage. Of the seven students reporting the highest wages, three come from families in the highest reported income category and one each in the second, third, fourth and fifth highest family-income categories. Since the students' reported earnings seemed high we checked the figures with comparison data taken from *Ontario Statistics 1975, Volume 2, Economic Series.*
In January 1974 the minimum hourly wage for general workers in Ontario was $2.00. For a 40-hour week that equals a gross weekly wage of $80. By October 1974 the minimum wage had risen to $2.25 per hour ($90.00 per week). In May 1975 it was $2.40 per hour ($96.00 per week). These students were interviewed in summer and fall 1975, and although the interviewer was told to ask them for a normal or average week's wage, they might normally work well over 40 hours. Many hourly paid workers do. Thirty-seven percent of our working dropouts earned under $100 per week, 60 under $125, 79 under $150.

In 1974 Ontario's average personal income per capita was $5,572. If we assume payment for annual holidays and divide by 52 that gives a weekly income of $107.15. The average weekly income reported by our working-dropouts was about $132.

In 1974 Ontario's industrial composite for average weekly earnings was $181.43. The composite was made up of the following:

Average weekly earnings, 1974

Manufacturing	$193.52
Construction	258.68
Transportation/communication	210.00
Trade	138.32
Finance/insurance/real estate	177.21
Service	130.86

In 1973, 55.1 percent of Ontario families had an income of more than $12,000 and 36.4 percent had an income of more than $15,000 p.a. In 1974 the median family income in Ontario was about $14,000 p.a. and the (estimated) median family income of the working dropouts was $11,500.

We came to the conclusion that these earnings reports look reasonable. They do not seem to be unduly inflated. To try to assess how contented these youngsters were with their jobs the questions was asked:

Considering your ability and education, do you think you're employed at your proper status? That is, do you feel you're over-employed? Under-employed?

The bulk of the sub-sample did not really know how to answer the question, but on reflection thought they were "about right" (58 percent); eight of them considered they were over-employed, none felt *very* over-employed; eight did not reply; there were 71 working-dropouts who clearly were dissatisfied — 55 felt they were under-employed (26.6 percent), and another 16 *very* under-employed (7.7 percent). The females were more frequently dissatisfied than the males. Job satisfaction not only comes from realizing one's earnings expectations, and feeling that the job status is appropriate (not *under-employed*, anyway), but also from feeling secure and adequately prepared. The largest number of dropouts left school to take jobs. We were curious to know whether they felt the school had been useful in preparing them for these jobs. They were asked;

How useful do you think your high school education was in preparing you for your job?

And they were given a 5-point scale for replies ranging from "very useful (1)" to "not at all useful (5)". There were 199 replies. The largest category was "not at all useful" (38 percent) followed by "not very useful" (26 percent). There were 13 who were "uncertain"; 42 had found some subjects useful (and usually mentioned them) and another 17 that some subjects were very useful. The common reply on the positive side was for a male student who was employed in some craft or production occupation to mention a particular school 'shop' which had enabled him to get the job; or for a female student to mention how useful she had found typing.

We cross classified the replies on this question by program designation, but since many schools no longer use a program designation the sub-sample was reduced to 108. There was no statistically significant relationship between the program a student had left and whether he/she considered its work had been useful in finding or keeping the job he/she held at the time the interview was taken.

In summary: Well over half the interviewed students were working dropouts. They were interviewed to try to find out how they had obtained their jobs, whether their employment seemed stable, at what occupational level they were employed, what was their range of earnings, whether they seemed satisfied with their jobs and whether they were using specific skills which had been learned at school. Most of these male dropouts had obtained blue collar jobs of an unskilled or semi-skilled nature; many of the females had clerical or sales jobs. On the whole they seem to be reasonably well paid for the level of their jobs: 67 were being paid about or below the Ontario minimum wage (32 were well below it since they earned $75 or less per week). One hundred and nine (60.2 percent), earned $125 per week or less, well below the average weekly earnings of the industrial composite. Using the 1974 weekly industrial composite wage of $181.43 as a comparison, we see that 87.3 percent of the working-dropouts were below it (i.e., we include up to our wage category $151-$175 per week), the bulk of them very far below it. There were nine students at the $176-$200 per week level (comparable to the 1974 average weekly wage in transportation, etc., and finance/insurance etc.). There were fourteen in our two top categories ($201 to over $250) whose reported earnings were comparable to, but lower than, the 1974 average weekly wages in the construction industry ($258.68).

About one third of the students had their jobs before leaving school, and well over half found jobs without undue delay. There was a sizeable minority, however, who experienced a delay of more than three months, and an even larger number had changed jobs at least once thus far during their short employed life. A small group were exhibiting considerable job instability. Males seemed to have better job histories than females. It might be argued that our interviews took place too soon to judge job stability. This sample had been employed for too short a time. The largest category had held their current jobs for less than three months. They obtained work through personal connections or by applying for jobs (sometimes replying to an ad). They did not use official or private employment agencies. Most of them earned $125 per week or less. About one-third were decidedly dissatisfied with their job status; they felt they were under-employed. Only a small group felt that their high school studies had been directly useful for their jobs. Where this was so, the males usually mentioned some 'shop' which was directly related to their work or had provided them with an appropriate background; the females mentioned commercial studies, particularly typing. The overwhelming impression from these interviews is that working-dropouts are a very 'straight' set of youngsters. They obviously subscribe to the work ethic.

Working-dropouts' family background

By cross-classifying we can describe their family backgrounds. Roughly three-quarters of them have Canadian-born fathers. The largest number of foreign-born fathers were British, and after that of European origin other than the four specified European countries (Ireland, France, Germany, or Italy), then non-European (7.4 percent), and then the specified European countries. A slightly smaller proportion (72.8 percent) of their mothers are Canadian-born. The largest number of foreign mathers are British and then of non-specified European origin. All but a handful speak English in their homes (96 percent), although some are bilingual. Only three spoke only French, two only Italian, two only other European languages, and one only a non-European language.

Remember we are dealing with dropouts from high school. When we look at their fathers' and mothers' formal education we gain some insight into inter-generational differences. Twelve (7.4 percent) had fathers whose education exceeded theirs (thus far). That is, the fathers had had some experience of university or had a university degree. For many jurisdictions grade 12 rather than grade 13 is the final high school year. Depending upon where we put grade 13, we have either 50.9 percent or 47.2 whose fathers' highest completed grade was one of the grades of high school. There were 69 (42.3 percent) whose fathers had attended school for eight school grades or less — i.e., whose education was well below the level of their dropout sons and daughters. The comparable figures for these youngsters' mothers were: 28.2 percent below their children's lowest level, i.e., had not completed above grade 8; 62.8 (or 66.0) of comparable level, i.e., some high school attendance but, depending upon one's treatment of grade 13, mostly not to the level of secondary school graduation; and 5.8 percent whose education exceeded (thus far) that of their dropout sons and daughters.

Most of these dropouts (89.4 percent) had fathers who were working. This exceeds the proportion among the unemployed dropouts and those who had entered other educational institutions, but it was less than the proportion of employed fathers among the interviewed dropouts who were found to have returned to school. The majority (52.7 percent) did not have mothers who were working for wages outside the home. In this they differ both from the interviewed dropouts who had returned to school and the ones who were unemployed. In fact the working dropouts were disproportionately represented among those whose mothers did not work. They formed 51,1 percent of the interviewed sub-sample for whom we have at least one current activity and a reply to the question about mothers' work, but their mothers formed 55.3 percent of the mothers who were "not working".

The distribution of their fathers' occupational level, as compared with the total interview sample and the fathers of unemployed-dropouts, was as follows:

Father's occupation	Working dropouts	All dropouts	Unemployed dropouts
Professional, technical	24.9%	25.3%	25.0%
Clerical	0.6	0.9	0.0
Sales	5.3	6.3	2.6
Service/recreation	11.8	10.3	6.6
Transport/communications	6.5	9.1	11.8
Craftsmen, production	37.9	36.6	40.8
Labourer	8.9	7.5	7.9
Other	4.1	4.1	5.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

A higher proportion of working-dropouts came from small families (two or three children). By the time one reaches the family of four (three siblings) their percentage is lower than that in the interview sample generally, except for the eight-child family.

Over half the interviewed dropouts had brothers or sisters who had dropped out of school; the proportion among the working-dropouts was much the same (54.8 *v.* 53.7 percent), lower than the unemployed one but higher than the studying ones.

Working-dropouts tend to report family incomes which are slightly more dispersed than the interview sample generally (i.e., a higher proportion in the very low category but a very similar proportion in the top category) as we see from the following:

Family income per week	Working dropouts	Total dropouts
Under $125	10.2%	8.6%
$126-$150	10.9	11.9
$151-$175	8.6	8.2
$176-$200	9.4	10.7
$201-$225	13.3	10.3
$226-$250	12.5	14.4
Over $250	35.2	35.8
Total	100.0	100.0

THE UNEMPLOYED DROPOUTS

There were 2332 respondents to the questionnaire who answered the question "What are you doing now?" by reporting that they were unemployed, 2149 if we deal only with the ones who reported unemployed as their first status. First let us recap the picture for the latter: they represent 28.1 percent of those who replied by reporting at least one activity, 10.7 percent of the 1974-75 dropouts from our cooperating schools; 52.8 percent of them were males, 47.2 females; 18.3 percent had dropped out of grade 9 and from the higher grades 29.1 percent, 26.2, 16.9 and 9.6; 1.2 percent of them had an average achievement of A, 7.5 were Bs, 26.1 Cs, 33.4 Ds and 31.9 Fs. If we take all who reported unemployed status on their questionnaires (whether as their first or subsequent choice, whether unemployed and looking for work or not looking for work), i.e., we take the largest possible figure, 2332 — which may well represent some double counting, e.g., a dropout who reported both that he was unemployed and bumming around and unemployed and travelling, since he has been doing both at different times in the months since he left school — we get the following picture:

Activity response	Male	Female	Total
Unemployed	1229	1103	2332

	Year					
Activity response	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Unemployed	368	592	561	364	216	2101

Activity response	A	B	C	D	F	Total
Unemployed	18	130	448	567	521	1684

The reader should keep these distributions in mind as we describe the unemployed-dropout more fully from the interview data.

DATA FROM THE INTERVIEWS OF UNEMPLOYED-DROPOUTS

This is the second largest group of interviews, students who replied to the question "What are you doing now?" that they were unemployed — 24.3 percent of the total interviewed; 58.3 percent of them were males, 41.7 females. In this they were a closer representation to the distribution by sex of the total dropouts reported (58.3 *v.* 58.1 percent males) than the respondents to the questionnaire. In the 1974-75 questionnaire the female position was somewhat over-represented because they had a higher response rate. In these interviews this was corrected.

Their first question was:

Are you looking for a job now?

Over three quarters were seeking work, more males than their representation in the sub-sample would suggest. Males formed 58.3 percent of the sample, 62.8 percent of those looking for work.

The second question asked:

How long have you been looking?

The replies were recorded in months and then coded into monthly categories. Their percentage distribution was as follows:

Number of months	Males	Females	Row Total	
	%	%	No.	%
Less than 1	42.3	57.7	26	25.2
1-3	71.2	28.8	59	57.3
4-6	33.3	66.7	12	11.7
7-9	50.0	50.0	4	3.9
10-12	0.0	100.0	1	1.0
12+	100.0	0.0	1	1.0
Total	58.3	41.7		100.0
N =	60	43	103	

Three-quarters had been looking for work for more than one month; the largest proportion, well over half, had been looking for between one and three months; almost 6 percent had been looking for more than six months. Females were over-represented among those who had been looking for work less than one month and in the category 4-6 months. Males were over-represented only in the 1-3 months category. In other words, males were disproportionately represented among the unemployed but females were more frequently found among those who had been looking for work for longer periods. We cross-classified the date the unemployed-dropouts had left school by the length of time they had been looking for a job. The result may be seen in table 41. Fifty-nine of the 77 (76.6 percent) had been looking for work for one to three months. For those at the top of the list in the table a year or almost a year had elapsed since leaving school, so they must have had some job (or jobs). Only one (each) had been looking for ten to twelve months or for over a year, and they had left school in September or October 1975. So the findings on length of time seeking work look plausible for those for whom we have both items of information, but this is only 77 of the 103. The third question also throws some light on this question of length and stability of employment. It asked:

Have you worked at all since leaving school?

Two of the students did not reply or their replies were vague (i.e., they may have been coded as "other" — there is among the "other" activities a small group who explained that they were neither employed nor unemployed, that they had never been regularly employed but they had done a series of odd jobs). In any case 82.5 percent of these students, although currently unemployed, had held jobs since they dropped out of school. Again the males were over-represented; 90 percent of them had had jobs, only 72 percent of the females. They were asked:

How many jobs have you had?

Although only 16 students had definitely answered "no" to the question on whether they had worked since they left school, there were 23 who did not report having had any jobs. So we have 80 replies which report numbers of jobs. Comparison with the working-dropouts may be seen from the following:

	Unemployed dropouts		Working dropouts	
Number of jobs	No.	%	No.	%
1	35	43.8	138	68.0
2	25	31.2	32	15.8
3	12	15.0	18	8.9
4 or more	8	10.0	15	7.3
Total	80	100.0	203	100.0

These data indicate a high level of employment instability. More than half these unemployed youngsters had already lost two or more jobs in the short time since they had left school. The students were asked:

How long did you work at your last job?

The replies, of course, should relate inversely with those to the question of how long they had been looking for work. Keep in mind that none of these youth will have been out of school longer than 14 or 15 months (i.e., dropped out September 1974, interviewed November or December 1975) and most have been out for much less than that. At the extremes: there were 26 who had reported that they had worked for less than one month, five that they had held their last job for more than twelve months and three for between ten and twelve months. The distribution of those who had worked for more than one month was as follows:

46 had held their last job for from 1-3 months, 56.8%
14 from 4- 6 months, 17.3%
13 from 7- 9 months, 16.0%
3 from 10-12 months, 3.7%
5 over a year, 6.2%

The males were under-represented in the "0" and "1" (1-3 months) codes and over-represented in all other categories. The next question was:

Why did you leave?

The most common reason for leaving the previous job was "laid off". We distinguished between being "laid off" and "fired". There were 35 students to whom the question did not apply or who did not answer it, the remaining 68 were distributed as follows:

40 (29 males, 11 females) had been laid off, 58.8%
9 (6 males, 3 females) had been fired, 13.3%
1 quit because she didn't like the type of job, 1.5%
6 (4 females, 2 males) quit because they didn't like the working conditions, 8.8%
There were 12 "other" reasons given, 17.6%

Even if we take all the firing and quitting reasons as evidence of inability to settle down and work satisfactorily (and this probably does some injustice to the students), we would have to conclude that most of the unemployed (say at least 60 percent) were unemployed because of economic conditions rather than personal insufficiency. The males were over-represented among those laid off or fired; the females among those who quit, but that number is very small.

The students were asked for a description of their previous jobs, and all but 21 provided one. These descriptions were coded as to occupational status using the 1971 census classification. The percentage distributions are as follows:

Occupational status	Males %	Females %	Row Total No.	Row Total %
1 Professional, technical or managerial	100.0	0.0	1	1.2
2 Clerical	41.2	58.8	17	20.7
3 Sales	42.9	57.1	7	8.5
4 Service and recreation	45.0	55.0	20	24.4
5 Transport and communication	75.0	25.0	8	9.8
6 Craftsman, factory, production process	92.3	7.7	13	15.9
7 Labourers	100.0	0.0	12	14.6
8 Primary occupations and other	50.0	50.0	4	4.9
Total	58.3	41.7		100.0
N =	52	30	82	

A comparison of the occupational status of the working — and unemployed-dropouts who were interviewed may be seen if we put their distributions one above the other, as follows:

Activity		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Working	%	3.9	18.1	8.4	19.1	8.4	24.5	13.2	4.4
Unemployed		1.2	20.7	8.5	24.4	9.8	15.9	14.6	4.9

The students were also asked:

Could you tell me how much money you were earning each week, before deductions?

There were 19 who did not provide data (16 had never had a job and 3 others failed to report); the wages of the others are compared with the wages of the working-dropouts below:

Weekly wage equivalence	Unemployed-dropouts		Working-dropouts
	No.	%	%
$75 or less	12	14.3	18
$76-$100	29	17.9	19
$101-$125	15	34.5	23
$126-$150	11	13.1	19
$151-$175	6	7.1	8
$176-$200	6	7.1	5
$201-$250	3	3.6	3
over $250	2	2.4	5
Total	84	100.0	100

The students were then asked:

Are you drawing unemployment insurance?

Most were not; ten did not answer. If the dropouts had never been regularly employed the question was irrelevant, so we expected a larger number of non-responses at least 16. In any case, 63 (61.2 percent) were not receiving insurance benefits, 30 were (29.1 percent). Males were over-represented among those receiving insurance. In other words, the types of job previously held were more likely to have been covered by unemployment insurance. Moreover, males had probably been employed longer, so the benefit was not exhausted.

How long had they been receiving unemployment insurance?

A few of the replies to this question are not credible. The students must have misunderstood the question because they could not have been employed long enough to have amassed such credits. We wonder if many reports were intended to be weeks rather than months. There were 72 students (69.9 percent) who responded "no" (no unemployment insurance received, for a variety of reasons). According to the replies to the first question there should have been 73 — i.e., there is one case where the student did not reply "yes" that she was receiving insurance benefit, but gave a period of time when she had received it. She had likely exhausted her benefit. Of the total: 26 had been receiving unemployment insurance for from 1-3 months (25 percent); 3 from 4-6 months (3 percent); and one each from 7-9 and 10-12 months (1 percent each).

The males were over-represented in the first two categories. One male and one female represent the two long categories which we think are errors. These unemployed-dropouts were then asked:

What do you figure your chances are of getting a good job?

The largest group were not hopeful. A four point scale was suggested, ranging from "very good" to "poor". There were ten who did not reply to the question — "really did not know"; 33 thought their chances "poor" (32 percent; 17 females and 16 males; the females over-represented) and 28 only "fair" (27.2 percent; 12 females to 16 males, the females slightly over-represented). There were 21 who thought their chances were "good" (20.4 percent, 13 males to 8 females, the males over-represented) and 11 "very good" (10.7 percent, 8 males to 3 females, the males very much over-represented). Considering the data from the interviews of the working-dropouts and the working/unemployed split of the dropouts who filled in questionnaires, the responses of the females do not seem unrealistic. Their chances of good employment are much less than the males'. The last question asked of this sample, which related to their unemployment/employment history, was:

Do you feel that your unfinished high school education has prevented you from getting a good job?

We were rather surprised to find that most of the students answered "no". They do not perceive a connection between being unemployed and looking for a job, and having generally poor prospects of getting a good job, *and* having dropped out of secondary school. There were eleven students who did not reply to the question, "did not know" or "could not say"; 36 (35 percent) thought their employment had been affected (i.e., answered "yes"), 56 (54.4 percent) did not think so. Since 56 is a larger number than the 32 who, in the previous question, had assessed their chances of getting a good job as "good" or "very good", there seems to be an inconsistency here. We, therefore, cross-classified the responses on this question with the replies to the previous question and also by the dropouts' achievement level and reported earnings (i.e., what they had earned when they were employed). The findings were as follows:

Student's estimate of chances of a good job	Student's reply on hindrance of incomplete high school education			
	Yes	No	No.	%
Very good	3	7	10	11.8
Good	7	13	20	23.5
Fair	10	15	25	29.4
Poor	12	18	30	35.3
Total Number	32	53	85	
Percentage	37.6	62.4		100.0

Of those who thought the incomplete education had prevented them from getting a good job thus far, 9.4 percent nevertheless thought their chances of eventually getting such a job were very good and another 21.9 percent that they were "good". At least they are optimistic.

Reported earnings (per week)	Student's reply on hindrance of incomplete high school education			
	Yes	No	No.	%
$75 or less	4	8	12	15.8
$76-$100	11	12	23	30.3
$101-$125	6	9	15	19.7
$126-$150	4	6	10	13.2
$151-$175	1	5	6	7.9
$176-$200	1	4	5	6.6
$201-$250	2	1	3	3.9
Over $250	0	2	2	2.6
Total Number	29	47	76	
Percentage	38.2	61.8		100.0

Those who felt the incomplete secondary school education had prevented their getting a good job are over-represented among the $76-$100 and $101-$125 per week earnings categories. It is interesting to note that they are consistently under-represented above $150 per week and in the $125-$150 category have almost the same representation as in the sub-sample (i.e., 13.8 percent *v.* 13.2). So the response seems to be logical: in the jobs they have had thus far their assessment of the hindrance of not having graduated from high school is directly related to their earnings, logical and consistent but only from a short-term point of view.

Achievement level	Student's reply on hindrance of incomplete high school education			
	Yes	No	No.	%
A	0	1	1	1.7
B	0	3	3	5.0
C	3	10	13	21.7
D	9	11	20	33.3
F	9	14	23	38.3
Total Number	21	39	60	
Percentage	35.0	65.0		100.0

The lower the achievement level the greater the recognition of the disability represented by the lack of secondary school graduation. The Ds and Fs were over-represented in the "yes" response (42.9 percent of the former *v.* 33.3 percent Ds in the sub-sample, and 42.9 of the latter *v.* 38.3 Fs in the sub-sample).

In summary: The dropouts who were unemployed when they were interviewed represented a slightly smaller percentage of the interview sample than the unemployed-dropouts represent of respondents to the questionnaire (24.3 percent *v.* 28.1 percent), and they include proportionately more males than the questionnaire sample (58.3 percent *v.* 52.7 percent). The replies of this sub- sample make dismal reading when compared with the working-dropouts, but they also emerge as a rather straight bunch. Over three-quarters are looking for work, and almost three-quarters had been looking for over a month. The largest group (well over half) had been looking for between one and three months. A small minority had been looking for more than six months. Most of these youngsters had had a job since leaving school; only about 18 percent had not. However, their job stability history is not good. Less than half who had been employed had had only one job, 25 percent had already had three or more jobs. This must be viewed in light of the length of time which had elapsed since they left school. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that most (well over half) had held their previous jobs only for between one and three months. They left because they were laid off or fired. Few had quit. When employed they had not held greatly differing jobs from the working-dropouts, and they had not in general earned less.

Most of the unemployed-dropouts were not drawing unemployment insurance benefit. There are a few who seem to have been drawing benefits for an unbelievably long period of time. These are likely to be coding errors or students using up benefits which had accrued from part-time or summer employment. The replies of this group of dropouts not only describe a poor employment history, but many perceive their employment prospects as poor. In other words they seem to be realistic in assessing their future. And yet most of them do not feel that it is the uncompleted secondary school education which will prevent them (or had prevented them thus far) from obtaining a good job.

Unemployed-dropouts' family background

By cross-classifying the activity response "unemployed" by the items of information about their families we can provide some background information for these students. A larger proportion had Canadian-born fathers than the working-dropouts (77.8 percent *v.* 73.5). Of those with foreign-born fathers, 42.9 percent came from non-specified European countries, 23.8 from Italy, 14.3 from Great Britain. A larger number also had Canadian-born mothers (77.8 percent *v.* 72.8 for the working-dropouts). The largest number of foreign-born mothers were non-specified European, and then British.

Ninety-seven percent speak English in their homes, although some are bilingual. Their father's highest grade of formal education tends to be lower than that of the working-dropouts: 33 out of 72 had fathers who did not enter secondary school, (45.8 percent *v.* 42.3 for the working-dropouts). Depending upon whether one includes grade 13 in or out of secondary school, 32 or 35 percent had fathers who had some experience of secondary school study but did not necessarily graduate; 9.7 had fathers whose education exceeded theirs, thus far, i.e., had fathers who had attended university or non-degree post-secondary institutions, some of them obtaining degrees. Their mothers' formal education was better than their fathers', and not too dissimilar from that of the working-dropouts.

There were 26.6 percent whose mothers had not entered high school *v.* 28.2 of the working-dropouts. Depending upon how grade 13 is counted either 63.3 or 68.4 percent had mothers who had attended secondary school but did not necessarily graduate. Their mothers did not attend university as frequently as their fathers; only 2.5 percent went beyond secondary school.

Eighty-three percent had fathers who were working, the smallest proportion of the interviewed dropouts, except for those who had left school for a variety of personal reasons.* The majority of their mothers were employed (56.7 percent). This was higher than the proportion for the working-dropouts, but not as high as those who had left school for personal reasons (57.9 percent) or who had returned to school (58.1 percent). So we have a picture of unemployed-dropouts whose parents are both working, with a minority (17 percent) whose fathers are unemployed. Although this is a minority it is the largest group of unemployed fathers except for the group of interviewed youngsters who had left school for personal reasons. The percentage distribution of unemployed-dropouts' fathers and mothers by job status was as follows:

Occupational status	Fathers of unemployed dropouts %	Total interview sample %	Mothers of unemployed dropouts %	Total interview sample %
Managerial, professional and technical	25.0	25.3	15.1	17.2
Clerical	0.0	0.9	22.6	24.2
Sales	2.6	6.3	15.1	15.1
Service/recreation	6.6	10.3	32.1	24.2
Transport/ communication	11.8	9.1	1.9	2.2
Craftsmen, factory production workers	40.8	36.6	5.7	13.4
Labourers	7.9	7.5	3.8	2.7
Primary and other	5.3	4.1	3.8	1.1

More of their fathers and mothers are in the low status jobs than was the case in the sample generally. Particularly for the mothers, fewer are in the top two categories and a much larger proportion in service occupations. Only 5.1 percent of the unemployed-dropouts were only children. The rest had one or more brothers or sisters and tended to come from rather larger families than the interview sample generally, as the following percentage distributions demonstrate:

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*i.e., whose destinations and activities did not include any of the working, studying or unemployed categories of response.

Number of siblings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+
Unemployed dropouts	12.9	14.0	28.0	11.8	15.1	6.5	4.3	2.2	5.4%
Interview sample	14.8	21.8	23.7	12.1	11.8	4.8	3.8	2.2	5.1%

Over 60 percent of the unemployed dropouts (the largest proportion of our five destination categories) had at least one sibling who had dropped out of secondary school. For the interview sample generally the proportion was 53.7 percent. Their family income relative to that of the interview sample generally may be seen from the following percentage distributions:

Family income	Under $125 p.w.	$126-150	$151-175	$201-200	$201-225	$226-250	Over $250
Unemployed dropouts	8.8	10.5	5.3	15.8	7.0	14.0	38.6%
Interview sample	8.6	11.9	8.2	10.7	10.3	14.4	35.8%

On the whole, the unemployed-dropout comes from a family of slightly lesser income but the difference is not great. They actually had a higher proportion in the top income category, but since they also have a larger proportion whose mothers work, their family incomes represent two or more salaries rather more frequently than would be the case generally in the interview sample.

THE STUDYING-DROPOUT

For much of the anaylsis we distinguished between those dropouts who were studying full-time or part-time when they filled in the questionnaires or were interviewed, those who had returned to school, their former one or another secondary school, and those who had entered other educational institutions. First, however, we shall deal with the total studying-dropouts (whatever the rank order of the reported activity on the questionnaire). Then we shall describe the type of studies reported on the questionnaire. After that we shall report the interview findings and family background of those who had returned to school or were studying elsewhere.

In 1974-75 there were 819 who listed studying (full or part-time) as one of their activities and for all but six we know sex. They represented 9.9 percent of the respondents to the question "What are you doing now?"; 4.1 percent of the 1974-75 dropouts from our cooperating schools; 53.4 were males, 46.6; 20.2 from grade 9, and from the higher grades, 23.3, 23.3, 16.5 and 16.8 percent; 2.8 had an average achievement level of A, 14.3 were Bs, 36.3 were Cs, 30.5 Ds and 16.1 percent Fs.

Taking *all* the studying responses to the questionnaire, we get the following picture, by sex, year of school and achievement level.

Activity	Male	Female	Total	
	%	%	No.	%
Studying full-time	58.2	41.8	411	100.0
Studying part-time	48.5	51.5	402	100.0
Total	53.4	46.6	813	100.0

Activity	Year					Total	
	1	2	3	4	5		
	%	%	%	%	%	No	%
Studying full-time	19.4	22.2	26.3	16.3	15.8	392	100.0
Studying part-time	8.4	16.7	23.6	28.3	23.0	382	100.0
Total	14.0	19.5	24.9	22.2	19.4	774	100.0

Activity	A	B	C	D	F	Total	
	%	%	%	%	%	No.	%
Studying full-time	3.9	15.5	32.8	32.3	15.5	232	100.0
Studying part-time	1.9	13.1	39.4	29.0	16.6	259	100.0
Total	2.9	14.3	36.2	30.5	16.1	491	100.0

Studying-dropouts by sex

There were 608 for whom we know sex, who in the 1974-75 survey described their programs of study or the institutions they had entered (see table 42). About one-third had returned to secondary school. The next largest category (27.5 percent) were taking night school classes or studying by correspondence; 15 percent had entered programs in a community college. The males were over-represented among those who had returned to school and those taking apprenticeship programs. The females were over-represented among those who were studying in a CAAT, a university, a secretarial school, a night school or a nursing school.

Studying-dropouts by year left

There were 578 who in the 1974-75 survey described their study programs, and for whom we know school grade. Almost two-thirds of the grade 9 studying-dropouts had returned to school. The proportion drops steadily the higher the grade left, until grade 12 (25.8 percent) and then in grade 13 it rose to slightly above the grade 11 level. The reverse was true for the next large category, those studying in night school or by correspondence. In this category we find 15.7 percent of the grade 9 studying-dropouts (for whom we know the type of study), and the percentage rises till it peaks at 37.9 percent of the grade 12s; then it drops to 29.8 percent of the grade 13s (still above the level of the grade 11s). The higher the school grade left the higher the proportion of dropouts studying in university. There were no grade 9 or 10 dropouts in university (of course) and we question the accuracy of the one reported for grade 11. There were four who had left grade 12 and ten grade 13 to enter university. The same progression (the higher the grade left the larger the percentage in the category) was more or less true for the larger number (85) who entered CAAT programs (1.2 percent of this category had dropped out of grade 9, 17.6 from grade 10, 28.2 grade 11, 23.5 grade 12, 29.4 grade 13). It is interesting to note that a larger proportion of grade 13 dropouts than grade 12s enter CAATs, although these institutions are intended to serve graduates from grade 12, and those with even less education.

Studying-dropouts by achievement level

For 358 of the students who reported study programs we have an average mark. The higher the average mark the more likely that the student will have returned to school. The As and Bs were over-represented in this category, the Cs and Ds under-represented, and the Fs at about the level to be expected given their share in the sub-sample; 44.4 percent of the A students in this sub-sample had returned to school and 35.8 of the Bs. The As and Bs were also greatly over-represented among the small number of studying-dropouts who entered university (three out of the six). This was not true of the group who had entered a CAAT; there it is the Cs who are over-represented, 44.2 percent of the CAAT category are Cs as compared with 38.5 of the sub-sample, 14.5 percent of the sub-sample went to study at a CAAT *v.* 16.7 of the C level studying-dropouts. The studying-dropouts who entered a secretarial or trade school were all Cs or Ds. These two achievement categories formed the bulk of the apprentices (combined 76.4 percent *v.* 68.1 in the sub-sample) and those studying in night school or by correspondence (combined 71.0 percent *v.* 68.1).

DATA FROM THE INTERVIEWS OF THE DROPOUTS WHO HAD RETURNED TO SCHOOL

At the beginning of the interview the dropout was asked the same question which had appeared on the questionnaire given to all 1974-75 dropouts from the cooperating schools: "What are you doing now?" The intention was to identify the main current activity and round out the picture of dropout activities which had been reported in statistical fashion for the total sample. Of the 423 students interviewed 44 had returned to school. Their interview started with the following question:

Why did you go back to school?

There was an even distribution by sex in this sub-sample (22 males, 22 females) and all replied to the question.

27% had not intended to drop out permanently
46% realized that they needed more education to get a good paying job, and therefore returned to school
7% had failed to find a steady job
2% had failed to find a job they liked
18% gave a variety of other reasons.

In other words, had most of these dropouts successfully settled into a steady, desirable type of job they would not have returned to school. Overwhelmingly their motivation for return was economic and vocational. This was even more true of the girls than the boys (not what we had expected). In spite of most secondary school programs not having a *direct* occupational purpose or link*, the kinds of job sought by the girls must require more secondary schooling than those of the boys. The reply that the dropouts realize they need more education to obtain a good job was more frequently given by girls than boys (60:40).

The second question asked:

Did you return to the same school or a different school?

About two to one they had returned to the same school (64 to 27 percent). Four did not answer the question. Disproportionately the girls return to the same school (68 percent). A number of conclusions might be drawn from this. For example, (a) that the boys show more enterprise in trying to change their school setting and thus ensure success in their re-entry; (b) that the boys need a change of personnel more than the girls, since those males who dropped out because of school-related reasons gave criticisms which were more personnel than program oriented; or (c) more of the boys live away from home and the change of school is related to a change of address. However, reference to the reasons for leaving school given by the questionnaire sample seems to eliminate explanation (b). Cross classifying by sex the first reasons for leaving we obtain a sub-sample which is 56.8 percent male, 43.2 percent female. The distribution by sex of those expressing dissatisfaction with teachers or teaching was 56.5 percent male, 43.5 female. Reference to question 2 of Section 5 of the interview schedule seems to eliminate explanation (c). The interview response on that question was 53.9 percent male, but only 36.4 of the interviewed students who reported that they do not live at home are male. In other words the bulk of the interviewed dropouts (both sexes) live at home, but males are under-represented among those who do not. Therefore it was not a change of address which caused the males to return to a different secondary school.

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*For evidence that students do not perceive secondary school as being directly useful in employment see replies to question 7 asked of the working-dropouts, p. 149.

When students drop out of school this is evidence that they are failing to receive school experiences which they think are satisfactory and necessary. As we have seen they give various reasons for leaving. Some are related to jobs and personal needs which are not connected with school; these students are not necessarily critical of schools or schooling; they do not necessarily wish to leave; often they are forced by circumstances to leave — circumstances over which school authorities have no control. However, many dropouts leave school critical of teachers, teaching, school programs, administrators and school atmosphere. They hate the whole experience. Others leave because of a history of failure. This being the case we expected that most studying-dropouts who had returned to school would have changed their schools, programs and courses in order to try to avoid repeating the conflicts or failures of the past. We asked:

Did you make any significant changes in your program of study?

Most school re-entries had made no changes. In fact in discussing their situation with them, the conviction emerges that these students have not learned much from the dropout experience. To put this another way, there is not much evidence that they have analysed the situation and have taken steps to ensure that they will now stay in school successfully to the end of their programs. They seem to be operating on blind faith. They *hope* all will go well with this second try, but when questioned they agree that nothing fundamental in the situation has been changed. When the interviewer pointed out that the reason for leaving remains unchanged, the reply invariably was that this time they hope it will be "okay". The faith is touching but the lack of realism is dismaying. Overall 69 percent of the sub-sample had not changed their programs. This was even more typical of the males than the females (73 percent of the males gave this reply; 64 percent of the females).

In summary: If the males who returned to school changed a school-related condition it was likely to be the school itself; if the females changed a condition it was likely to be a course or a program. Most re-entrants did not change either. Nevertheless these students had thought seriously about the disadvantages of the dropout decision and regretted it sufficiently to give school another try. They were interviewed between four and fourteen months after they had left school, most of them at the beginning of a new school year. What was their current attitude to school? They were asked:

Are you satisfied with school this year?

Most were. A quarter were very satisfied and another 41 percent were satisfied. Only nine percent were definitely dissatisfied and eleven percent were not certain. In other words when questioned after they had returned to school, but not long into the new school year, about three quarters of these re-entrants were still happy with their decision to return; about one in five were regretting it or were troubled. Six (14 percent) did not reply to the question. The males were over-represented in the uncertain and dissatisfied groups (3:1). The re-entrants who were satisfied with school were then asked:

Are you planning to complete your program?

Only one said definitely that he intended to leave again, 32 expected to complete, and eleven were uncertain or did not answer the question. But this facile reply should not be taken at face value. The prognosis for re-entrants is that many will leave again. When the interviewers pointed out that none of the problems which had driven the students to drop out seemed to have been solved, they still replied with confidence, "Yeah, I'll graduate this time". Those who had not expressed satisfaction with the school were asked:

Are you thinking of dropping out again?

Five were; two were not; the other two did not reply. So, of the 44 re-entrants interviewed at the end of the study, between September ad December 1975 (i.e., during their first term back at school) six intended to leave again, 29 seemed reasonably satisfied, and the other nine were in various stages of doubt (intending to complete but not too happy, uncertain about whether they were happy and whether they would complete).

In summary: About one quarter of the studying-dropouts who returned to secondary school had never intended their dropout decision to be permanent. They went out for a 'rest' or because of some immediate problem whose solution seemed to indicate the desirability of a temporary absence — a breathing space, no more. Most of the others who had returned did so because of disappointment with the world outside rather than any attraction of the world inside. Many returning dropouts show a touching faith that "things will work out okay" and are determined to give school a good 'try' this time, but few seem to have solved the difficulty which drove them to drop out the first time. A few were already planning to leave again. More males than females changed schools when they re-entered; more females than males changed their courses of study.

DROPOUTS WHO HAD ENTERED SOME OTHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

There were 25 interviewed students who replied to the question, "What are you doing now?" by reporting that they were attending some other educational institution. Their interviews began with the question:

What type of school are you attending?

Two did not reply, three reported "other" institutions (one of a kind), and among the rest: two were in university, eleven in community colleges, two in business schools, three in trade schools, and two in nursing schools. Comparison between the institutions attended by the interviewed students and the equivalent questionnaire sub-sample may be seen by the following:

Institution attended	Interview sample %	Questionnaire sample %
University	8	3.9
Community college	44	22.1
Business school	8	—
Trade school	12	5.1*
Nursing school	8	0.7
Apprenticeship	—	16.5
Correspondence/night school	—	40.5
Other and no reply	20	11.2
Total	100	100.0
N =	25	412

*Includes business or secretarial school

The difference between the study destinations of the two samples may well be more apparent than real. In the questionnaire sample less than 5.1 percent were attending trade schools (because that total includes secretarial or business schools) but for some of the apprentices the study part of the program may have been in a trade school. Apprenticeship courses were not separately specified as a study destination in the interviews. Such students were coded as “other” Among the 25 in this interview sub-sample there was one more male than female. The second question asked was:

When did you first inquire about going there?

Slightly more had inquired *before* they left school than after (52 *v.* 40 percent; two did not reply). So the fact that there was a more desirable place of study was a factor in these dropouts' decision to leave. Even for entry to university, apparently, graduation from secondary school is not indispensalbe. To some extent, with the creation of alternative study sectors, like the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, we have created rival institutions to the secondary school, particularly since many of their programs do not require *completion* of secondary school for admission. However, there is no evidence of the great transfer flow to the CAATs which many school critics allege is taking place. We were curious to see what role school personnel had played in bringing about this transfer to some other educational setting. So the students were asked:

Did you receive any help from your school guidance counsellor or a teacher?

Most students did not reply to the question, indicating probably that it was irrelevant. (This would be the case for the ten who had already reported they made the decision after they left school; they were unlikely to *return* to school to discuss it.) The twelve who replied split evenly — six had discussed it with someone at school; six had not. In other words less than one-quarter of those who left school to go to some other educational institution sought the advice of school personnel — even though school personnel are probably the best *educational* advisors available, i.e., they have the most precise and reliable information about other programs, entrance requirements, pre-requisites, fees, etc. In view of the investment in guidance in our high schools this is discouraging. We would have thought that providing this type of information was one area, at least, where the secondary school personnel would be seen as experts. If the students did not consult their school teachers how then, did they learn about these educational programs? We asked them:

How did you first contact the school?

Twenty percent simply wrote to the institution and returned application forms by mail; 56 percent visited the institution and spoke to one of its admissions advisors; 12 percent reported other ways of making contact; and 12 percent did not answer the question. It has been suggested that many of the students dropping out of secondary school and entering some other educational institution, have simply exchanged one setting for another to study more or less the same subjects. Thus, at considerable expense (sometimes to themselves but more commonly to the Ontario taxpayer), they have achieved a freer, more adult study atmosphere. This allegation clearly does not apply to those who entered trade schools or nursing school, but it might be true of a grade 13 dropout and a student in the preliminary year of a university, or a grade 12 or 13 dropout and students in some of the CAAT programs. And so we asked:

Are you studying any subjects now which you could have taken at high school?

There were 15 university, community college or business school students who might have answered; five students reported that they were studying such subjects, two said "no", the others did not reply. Studying-dropouts who entered other educational institutions are a small stream anyway. On the basis of this evidence, the suspicion that they are taking high school subjects seems unfounded. Most of these other educational institutions are heavily subsidized by public funds but they are not free (as secondary schools are); they charge fees. So we asked a number of questions about the payment of fees. They were as follows:

Do you have to pay fees?

Nineteen of the 25 (76 percent) pay fees; three answered with a definite "no" and three did not reply.

How much?

The fees paid are substantial. Of the 15 who reported specific amounts only six were paying fees of less than $250, four paid between $250 and $499, and five paid between $500 and $800.

How are you paying them?

The support generally comes from parents. Nineteen replied to the question; ten had parents who paid their fees and they live at home (40 percent), three lived on savings from summer and other work (12 percent) and another two work part-time (8 percent). Only one had taken out a loan. Three had assistance from other sources. Since there had been criticisms of school atmosphere and such complaints were given as the prime reason for leaving school, we thought it would be useful to ask this group of dropouts to compare the atmosphere of the two institutions they had recently attended. They were asked the following question:

How would you compare the learning atmosphere with that of high school? Which is more conducive to learning?

And they were given a 5-interval suggested answer ranging from "this is much better" to "high school is much better". We expected the students to prefer their new institutions. After all, they had voluntarily left school and entered the new institutions, and most of them were paying high fees for the privilege of attending. They were unlikely to think that the shool was better. However, we were curious to see if *any* would take that position, and also how strongly their preference for the new institution would be expressed. We also, by the wording of the question, specifically directed their attention to the two institutions as *learning* settings. Three students did not answer. Most of the rest (15 out of 27) thought the new institution "much better", and another two "somewhat better". Females were much more vehement in their praise of the new institutions than males. Since success in studies rests heavily on motivation this enthusiastic endorsement speaks in favour of the transfer to the other educational institution. The positive motivation is also evident from the response to the next question.

Are you planning to complete your program?

Twenty-one replied "yes", only one said definitely "no", and three others gave rather vague answers. The girls were more positive than the boys, all twelve replied "yes"; only nine of the thirteen boys. The interviews were held quite early in the new study programs. These students had demonstrated that they could not 'stay the course' of four or five year secondary school programs. What value should be placed on this new commitment? They were asked:

How long will it take you to complete it?

The replies were translated into months. Five students gave no information, the remaining twenty divide fairly evenly between those taking short courses and those taking courses requiring more than one academic year: eight were taking courses of three months or less, five courses from four to twelve months, and seven courses of longer than twelve months. The females were taking longer courses than the males.

There were four students who had not specifically said that they intended to complete their courses. The final question was reserved for them but only two replied to it. We asked:

Why not?

And suggested a number of responses as well as providing space for a dictated reply. One male student decided that he would leave to go to work; another had a personal reason for expecting to leave before completion of the program.

In summary: A small stream of students drops out of secondary school to enter some other educational institution. If we judge from the interviews it represents about 10 percent of the dropout loss. If we judge from the questionnaires it is only half that amount — 5 percent. This seems to be a well motivated group. The students regard their new institutions as "much better" places, more conductive to learning than the schools they left. They plan to finish their new programs and about half have taken on studies which will last for more than one academic year. They pay high fees for these programs, for the most part well over $250. Either their parents pay the fees or they support themselves on summer and part-time earnings. They show independence and initiative in finding out about the programs and applying to the institutions for admission. Either they make the inquiries entirely on their own by mail, or they visit the institutions in person. Only a few seek the assistance of their former school teachers, even though many make the first inquiries about the new programs before they actually leave school. On the whole, the evidence of these interviews suggests that the prognosis for success of this dropout stream is good. Their decision to leave secondary school should not be regarded as a 'mistake'.

The studying-dropouts' family background

We cross-classified the interviewed studying-dropouts by the usual list of family background characteristics, and found that 81.8 percent of those who had returned to school had Canadian-born fathers and 83.7 percent had Canadian-born mothers. The proportion of Canadian-born parents for those studying in other institutions was lower: 48.0 percent had Canadian-born fathers and 60.0 percent Canadian-born mothers. Those who had returned to school showed the same high proportion (95.5 percent) coming from English-speaking homes as was found for the employed and unemployed-dropouts. But the proportion of those studying elsewhere coming from English-speaking homes was lower (80.0 percent). The distribution of their fathers' formal education was as follows:

Father's education	Returned to school %	Studying elsewhere %
No schooling	0.0	4.2
Grades 1-8	29.4	33.4
Grades 9-12	41.2	29.1
Grade 13	5.9	4.2
University (some, degree, or graduate study	20.6	29.2
Non-university post-secondary	2.9	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Roughly, 29 percent of those who had returned to school had fathers of a lower educational level than themselves (i.e., grade 8 or less). The proportion was higher for those studying elsewhere, about one-third, and also 4.2 percent of that group had fathers who had had no formal schooling. Either 41.2 percent or 47.1 percent

180

(depending upon how grade 13 is treated) of those returning to school had fathers of more or less similar education to the dropouts (i.e., had attended secondary school but not necessarily to completion). The proportion of those studying elsewhere was lower (33.3 percent or 29.1 percent). The proportion of these students having fathers who had had some experience of university or other post-secondary study was surprisingly high — much higher than was the case for the working or unemployed-dropouts. This is in accord with the general finding that children's length of schooling and achievement levels correlate highly with the educational levels of their parents. The fact that so large a group of parents had attended university probably accounts for their pressure on their children to return to secondary school. Whatever the explanation, 20.6 percent of the dropouts who had returned to school had fathers who had attended university, and another 2.9 percent had fathers who had attended non-university post-secondary institutions. The proportion for those dropouts who were studying elsewhere was even higher — 29.2 percent of their fathers had attended university, a very high percentage when you realize that these dropouts are generally aged 18-21, i.e., their fathers are middle aged (40-50 years old probably), which means they attended university during or just after World War II when participation in university study was less common than is true today. The percentage distribution of their mothers' formal education was as follows:

Mother's education	Returned to school %	Studying elsewhere %
No schooling	0.0	5.3
Grades 1-8	23.1	31.6
Grades 9-12	53.8	47.4
Grade 13	10.3	10.5
University (some, degree or graduate study)	7.7	5.3
Non-university post-secondary	5.1	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0

A smaller percentage of the mothers than the fathers were below their children's educational level; e.g., 23.1 percent *v.* 29.4 with the equivalent of eight grades or less. The figure for those studying elsewhere was higher (31.6 percent), but lower than the proportion for their fathers. Either 53.8 percent or 64.1 (depending upon the inclusion or exclusion of grade 13) of those returning to school had mothers about their own educational level. The proportion for those studying elsewhere was almost as high (47.4 percent or 57.9). But fewer of these dropouts' mothers had attended university than their fathers. For those who had returned to school the proportion was 7.7; for those studying elsewhere, 5.3 percent.

The bulk of the fathers are gainfully employed — 92.7 percent for those who had returned to school, the highest percentage of our interviewed groups, 87.0 percent for those who were studying elsewhere. Overall (i.e., for studying-dropouts) this is lower than the percentage of the working-dropouts but higher than that of the unemployed-dropouts or those engaged in "other" or "personal" activities. The dropouts who had returned to school also had the highest proportion of employed mothers (58.1 percent).

The fathers' occupational status was as follows:

Occupational status	Returned to school %	Studying elsewhere %
Managerial/professional technical	25.6	28.6
Clerical	2.6	4.8
Sales	12.8	19.0
Service/recreation	7.7	4.8
Transport/communication	17.9	4.8
Craftsmen/factory production etc.	30.8	28.6
Labourer	2.6	4.8
Primary and other	0.0	4.8
Total	100.0	100.0

The sub-group studying in institutions-other-than-secondary-schools has the largest percentage of fathers in professional or technical employment. The fathers of the school re-entrants are above the occupational status of the working and unemployed-dropouts but not by much. On the other hand, only a very small percentage of those who had returned to school had fathers who were labourers (2.6 percent).

The mothers' occupational status was as follows:

Occupational status	Returned to school %	Studying elsewhere %
Professional/managerial/ technical	16.7	11.1
Clerical	20.8	44.4
Sales	8.3	22.2
Service/recreation	37.5	0.0
Transport/communication	8.3	0.0
Craftsmen/factory production	4.2	22.2
Labourer	4.2	0.0
Primary and other	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Those studying elsewhere had the lowest percentage of professionally employed mothers, except for the dropouts engaged in "other" or "personal" activities. The professional etc. proportion for the dropouts who had returned to school was higher but still well below that of their fathers and below the mothers of the working dropouts. As one would expect, the proportion of studying-dropouts' mothers engaged in clerical and sales work was higher than that for their fathers. Almost 21 percent of the mothers of the dropouts who had returned to school were clerical workers. The proportion for dropouts studying elsewhere was even higher, 44.4 percent. The school re-entrants also commonly had mothers employed in service occupations (37.5 percent).

Only 2.3 percent of those who had returned to school, and none of those studying elsewhere, were 'only' children. The percentage distribution of the studying-dropouts by family size was as follows:

Number of siblings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Re-entrants to school	11.6	27.9	23.3	16.3	7.0	4.7	4.7	2.3	2.3%
Studying elsewhere	8.0	36.0	20.0	12.0	12.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	8.0%
Interview sample	13.7	19.9	21.7	10.9	11.3	4.3	3.3	1.9	5.0%

About 12 percent of the re-entrants had only one sibling, well below the level of the working-dropouts (17.1 percent), and those studying elsewhere had the lowest number from this size family (only 8.0 percent). Nevertheless, taking three or fewer children as a small family (i.e., two or fewer siblings), 41.8 percent of the dropouts who had returned to school and 44.0 percent of those studying elsewhere come from small families as compared to 31.6 percent for the interview sample generally, 37.8 percent for the working-dropouts and 32.0 percent for the unemployed-dropouts.

These two studying groups had fewer siblings who had dropped out of school than had the working, unemployed or "other" interviewed dropouts. But still a substantial minority had brothers or sisters who had left secondary school without completing their programs — 38.1 percent of the school re-entrants, 48.0 percent of those studying elsewhere.

Their family income distributions were as follows (none came from families having less than $126 p.w.):

Family income	Returned to school %	Studying elsewhere %
$126 - $150	13.3	13.3
$151 - $175	13.3	13.3
$176 - $200	13.3	6.7
$201 - $225	6.7	6.7
$226 - $250	16.7	20.0
Over $250	36.7	40.0
Total	100.0	100.0

A larger percentage of these students than any of the other interviewed groups come from families with an income of over $250 p.w., but they also tend to have high proportions in the lower income groups (except for the very lowest where they were not represented at all).

In summary: Studying-dropouts have Canadian-born parents, as do dropouts generally, but a large minority of the sub-group who are studying in other institutions have mothers who are foreign-born and a majority of them have foreign-born fathers. However, they speak English in their homes. A large minority (20-30 percent) have fathers who attended university. The proportion of mothers of this high educational level is lower, but fewer mothers than fathers are in the lowest educational categories (grade 8 or less). Between 25 and 29 percent have fathers whose occupational status is professional/technical or managerial. The comparable group of mothers was smaller. Employed mothers were concentrated in clerical and sales occupations. The mothers were also fairly heavily represented in service occupations. They are very similar to the other interviewed groups in family size, with slightly higher representation among the very small families. Overall about 40 percent might be said to come from small (total three children) families. They have fewer sibling dropouts than the other interviewed samples but still a large group have brothers or sisters who left secondary school before graduating (38 to 48 percent). They do not come from very affluent families but they are not among the very poor. On the whole their families' incomes were slightly higher than those of the other interviewed samples. They are not represented in our lowest income categories, for example, and are somewhat more common in the highest ones. Between 37 and 40 percent come from families having a total weekly income in excess of $250.

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Who influenced the decision to leave school?

This part of the report is in three sections. The first deals with evidence from the questionnaires as to when the student decided to leave school, whether the decision was caused by some recent change, and whether it was a sudden decision or had grown slowly over time. The second, using the questionnaire data, reports the attitude of parents to their son's or daughter's decision to leave school. The third discusses the interview findings on these questions and tries to put the parental position into perspective. It also provides some evidence as to peer group influence on the dropout and re-entry decisions.

Was the decision to leave a sudden one?

The answer to this question is "Not for most of the dropouts". We had 8141 respondents to our questionnaire; 12 percent of them did not answer this question, so we have 7163 replies for anlysis, distributed as follows:

470 (6.6 percent) reported that a recent change in school — any kind of change, in courses, personnel procedures, policy or regulations — was a factor in causing them to leave school, not necessarily the prime reason but a factor.

1998 (27.9 percent) reported that it was not a specific change which had influenced them but theirs *had* been a sudden decision.

4695 (65.5 percent) reported that theirs was not a sudden decision; it had not been caused, or even greatly influenced, by any recent school change; the conviction had been growing over some time that they "might as well leave school", "it would be better to leave school", they "had little choice in the circumstances but to leave school". These are our paraphrases of their positions. The build up of conviction over time may have elements of all three positions, of course, and one must recognize that not all these youngsters were equally articulate in describing what occurred.

But the responses to this question certainly provide an answer to critics of the school system who have one-word answers to all its problems, as well as to critics who ride a particular hobby horse and account for all the ills of schools by reference to one phenomenon. The first part of this question was put, primarily, to see if there was any evidence of substantial student opposition to the credit system. Do the dropouts see the credit system as an adverse change? Are they using it as a scapegoat to account for leaving school before they even complete their school year? The answer is "No". The credit system is a non-issue. It was mentioned in only a small number of cases — so seldom, in fact, that we were surprised. Any aspect of recent school change might well be expected to draw, say, five percent mention in a sample of over 7000 students.

Of the 470 dropouts who reported that their decision to leave school had been influenced by a recent school change, 308 wrote the reason on the questionnaire. These were coded using much the same eight categories* as were used on the 1973-74 survey. Their distribution was as follows:

92	(29.9 %)	staff/teachers
61	(19.8 %)	changes in courses of study
34	(11.0 %)	credit system
6	(1.9 %)	too many rules
33	(10.7 %)	conflict with the administration
20	(6.5 %)	lack of freedom of choice in programs
6	(2.0 %)	poor general school atmosphere
44	(14.3 %)	other
12	(3.9 %)	change of school

Many of the sudden changes were variations of personality conflicts — i.e., the movement to their class of a teacher they did not get on with; having again a teacher they did not get on with lower down the school; the change from a favourable to a hostile principal or vice-principal. In fact the details of these reasons probably would serve as the basis for an essay on the problem of personality conflicts in a human system where the teacher/pupil relationship gives one of the personalities all the room to manoeuvre. For the other personality, flight is the only solution to the problem. At least, that is how it seems to be perceived by the ones who flee. The students who stay in school have learned to cope with personality conflicts in one way or another — either by "turning off" or "cooling out" adverse personalities, or successfully fighting them in ways permitted by the system. This is an important message. One cannot expect to avoid personality conflicts in large human systems and the condition for conflict is present whenever the interacting personalities change (i.e., you go from a 'good' relationship to a 'bad' one). A secondary school is a system of constant change in teacher personalities. Teachers of course also have to cope with constant change in the mix of students, but that is not the problem we are dealing with here. With every change in teacher (or principal, etc.), the student has to face the possibility that it may be a change for the worse rather than a change for the better. All through his school life the student is being conditioned to cope with such changes. And the incentive to learn to cope is high when the reward system works in favour of the individual. Thus the student with good marks (good prospects for a long academic career) or an occupational goal which *requires* completion of secondary school (to be a doctor, lawyer, teacher, nurse, etc.) has both the motivation to learn to cope with adverse personalities and, probably, conditions which reduce personality conflict on both sides. The motivation for the others must come from outside (from their family, from the society — as in Ontario in the 60s when education was seen as a 'good thing' leading to the 'good life'). If this exogenous motivation is changed the non-endogenously-motivated student is left with the personality conflicts and no counteraction, no incentive to (or reward for) learning how to cope with them. Students who do not learn to cope are at greater risk of 'running away' once it is legally possible to do so.

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*The categories are in a slightly different order and they were broadened somewhat to accommodate slight differences in emphasis apparent from the precise words used by the student. For example, it will be seen that the "poor general school atmosphere" of 1974-75, was the category called "lack of school spirit" in 1973-74.

A question about the timing of the decision was first included on the 1973-74 pilot study, so we have some comparison data, although that was not a large sample and the question was not identically worded. However, that survey did include two large city boards and the data of both surveys suggest that recent changes in city schools have caused more problems than changes in the province generally, as we see from the following:

	1974-75 Urban %	1974-75 Rest of sample %	1973-74 Urban %	1973-74 Rest of sample %
No, no recent change	13.4	11.9	— *	— *
Yes, recent change	12.4	5.9	15.8	14.6
No, but decision was sudden	32.5	23.9	1.8	6.5
No, and decision not sudden	41.7	59.0	82.4	78.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*The 1974-74 survey provided for only 3 possible responses so the percentages of these categories will be larger; it is the comparison between the urban boards and the rest of the sample each year which should be noted.

The influence of a recent change was more important in the urban boards. However, the general position did not change over the two years. For the great bulk of the students dropping out of school is not a sudden decision, nor is it triggered by some recent change.

The number of students who wrote-in a specific recent change on the 1973-74 questionnaire was small (180 out of 1488 who replied to the question), so each category represents only a handful of dropouts. The following changes were mentioned:*

54	(30.2 %)	staff
41	(22.9 %)	courses
27	(15.1 %)	credit system
6	(3.3 %)	lack of choice of courses
20	(11.2 %)	strictness of rules
25	(14.0 %)	other changes
6	(3.3 %)	lack of school spirit

Disputes such as those covered by our comments on personality conflicts might well account for all 54 of the staff changes, and also for a number of the "lack of choice of courses", "strictness of rules"; "lack of school spirit", however, really criticizes peers. Students' complaints about courses (discussed in detail in our interviews) frequently amount to complaints about how a specific teacher handles a specific course, or generalized dissatisfaction with the teachers' inability to see that the courses are (a) not relevant or (b) not useful to that student or (c) too difficult for him, etc. "Lack of choice of courses" is a surprising complaint when we remember the wide choice of subject in most Ontario high schools and the freedom of choice under the credit system. Sometimes the complaint emerges that timetabling, prerequisites, or the offerings at the particular school impose constraints beyond the general level. But quite frequently the student's complaint is really about a teacher, a guidance counsellor, or the school principal who seems to be interpreting or manipulating the rules in a particular way, e.g., that the student was required to take mathematics (or French or English) *again*. This is a particularly common complaint, and usually is coupled with the name of the teacher or principal who is seen as requiring "it". The rules referred to in "strictness of rules" tend to be non-academic, general behaviour norms. Such rules are seen as petty and personal, and they are often associated with a particular teacher, principal or vice-principal.

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*Plus one which was coded as "no change", which seems to conflict with the "recent change" main response to the question. The student may have meant that there had been something which could be changed (i.e., was subject to the student's choice) and now, because of a change in the school, no longer could be changed. Such a "change" would belong either with the category "lack of choice" or with the category "strictness of rules".

The timing of the decision by sex

Of the 8141 dropouts who completed a questionnaire, there are 7071 for whom we know sex who replied to this question. The relationship between the sub-sample's distribution by sex and the replies to the question are not statistically significant. Males are very slightly more prone than females to have been influenced by some recent change (6.6 percent in all; 58 percent male, 42 female; the subsample had a male:female ratio of 56:44). The students who reported that the decision to leave was made over a long time are in almost the same proportion by sex as the sub-sample. But it should be borne in mind that females are slightly over-represented among our questionnaire respondents, so there is probably a somewhat greater difference between the males and females than is indicated here, with the males rather more influenced by some recent school change. Nevertheless, for both sexes, the decision to leave school develops slowly, over a long time.

The distribution of response by sex was slightly different in the 1973-74 survey; not for those uninfluenced by recent changes, whose decision had been ripening over time (i.e., not for the majority of the respondents), but for the other two categories. That year the females were over-represented among those making a sudden decision and those disturbed by a recent change, as we see from the following:

Reply to question	Male	Female	Total
	%	%	%
Yes	55.0	45.0	100.0
No, sudden	50.8	49.2	100.0
No, over time	58.9	41.1	100.0
Total	58.0	42.0	100.0

In the 1973-74 survey we had 380 specified recent changes given by students whose sex was known. Adverse changes in staff (apart from administrators) account for almost one third of the total. If we add conflict with principals and vice-principals the total rises to 41.4 percent of the sub-sample. Males represent 58.6 percent of this group; they are over-represented among those specifying teacher or staff changes (62.0 percent), complaining of the rigidity of rules (75 percent); in conflict with principals and vice-principals (69.7 percent); and disliking a change which caused (for them) a deterioration in the atmosphere of the school. The specific recent changes which disturbed the females seem to have been less directly associated with people. Females represent 41.4 percent of the sub-sample. Their complaints were unexpectedly large in the "changes in courses or programs" (45.0 percent), "lack of freedom of choice of courses" (50.0 percent), and among those who had changed schools, did not like the change and so dropped out (58.3 percent). Such transfers may, of course, have led to conflicts of personality, but the girls did not describe them as such. This is an interesting finding, because it seems to upset the myth that females are particularly sensitive to personal relations and will shift their setting if relationships are not good. For example, female labour has traditionally been found to be more affected by supervisory relations and work atmosphere than wage rates and fringe benefits. Turnover in a typing pool cannot be greatly reduced by raising rates of pay, but it can be immediately affected by a change in supervisor. So, although the relationship of "specific school change" to sex is not statistically significant, the type of change cited by males is likely to be different from that reported by females. If we wish to avert dropout we must be aware that the response of male students to a proposed change in school personalities and policies will differ from that of females, but for neither sex do such changes constitute a decisive factor in causing them to leave school or remain in school.

Between the 1973-74 and 1974-75 surveys there was a slight shift in specified changes. Teachers and courses were the ones most commonly mentioned, and without much difference in frequency (about 30 percent and 20 percent each year), but in 1973-74 a larger number of students mentioned the credit system, although in absolute terms they were still a very small number (15.6 percent in 1973-74; 10.6 in 1974-75; they represent 1.6 percent of the reported dropouts in our 1973-74 sample of 3304, and 0.6 of the 20,027 reported in our 1974-75 sample). In the earlier year it was the females who were over-represented among those reporting some disturbing change in teachers or staff (52.0 percent *v.* 45.5).

In summary: Although there seems to be stability in the type of recent change which will influence the decision to leave school, there does not appear to be the same stability by sex. Changes in teachers and staff are much more likely to cause the student to leave school than any other type of change, and this holds true whatever the base for analysis. Changes in courses are somewhat less important but still loom very large among the specified adverse changes. In the larger study of 1974-75 the males were disproportionately disturbed by personnel changes and personal conflicts. The females seemed to be more concerned with changes of a non-personnel nature. The reverse was found in the sample study of the year before.

The timing of the decision by year (or grade) left

There were 6841 who replied to this question for whom we know the school grade left. The statistical relationship between these two variables was only weak. The dropouts from the upper two grades were slightly more frequently found among those objecting to some current change. (Changes are probably harder to accommodate the greater the investment in the *status quo*.) The "sudden" decision-makers peaked both absolutely and relatively in grade 11 and were over-represented slightly in grades 12 and 13, as may be seen from the following percentage distributions:

Timing of decision	Year 1	2	3	4	5	Total
Sudden decision	12.6	24.9	26.3	22.4	13.9	100.0%
Total response	13.9	24.7	28.2	20.4	12.9	100.0%

So much for the common feeling that as one gets older one becomes less prone to taking precipitate decisions! We checked this by preparing a two-way tabulation for each grade, by age of student and timing of the decision. The sub-samples are slightly reduced because of non-responses on age. The percentage distributions by grade were as follows:

Year 1 Age:	15 or younger	16	17	18	19	20 or older
Sudden decision	21.7	63.1	10.8	3.6	0.4	0.4%
Total sub-sample	16.2	66.8	12.8	3.6	0.5	0.1%
N = 864						
Year 2	5.1	55.6	26.0	10.4	2.2	0.7%
	6.2	57.2	26.6	8.3	1.3	0.4%
N = 1568						
Year 3	1.8	32.3	36.0	21.7	6.0	2.2%
	1.3	36.1	39.0	17.5	4.8	1.3%
N = 1775						
Year 4	0.3	5.1	39.4	35.6	13.4	6.2%
	0.1	5.5	39.0	38.4	13.2	3.8%
N = 1293						
Year 5	0.0	0.5	14.8	51.9	25.4	7.4%
	0.1	1.1	13.3	57.9	21.3	6.3%
N = 803						

The over-representation of an age class is shown when the upper percentage (i.e., its percentage in the "sudden decision" category) exceeds the percentage of the sub-sample of dropouts of that age. Those 15 and younger were over-represented among the respondents from grades 9, 11 and 12. The 16 year olds were generally under-represented, and so were the 17 year olds. The more consistent over-representation seems to occur in the older age groups regardless of grade — dropouts 20 and older, the 19 years olds and (to a lesser extent) the 18 year olds. So among these dropouts it would *not* be true to say that the older they are (whatever their school grade) the more likely that their decision to leave school will be one carefully taken over a long period of time. There is some evidence that the older the dropout the more likely the decision to leave school will be a hasty one.

For those reporting that the dropout decision was taken over a long period of time we find a slight under-representation in grades 11 and 12. This is the reverse of the finding on the sudden decision (naturally if a larger than expected number have taken a sudden decision, a smaller than expected number will have taken a long term one); it may be seen from the following:

Timing of decision	Year 1	2	3	4	5	Total
Decision over long time	14.3	25.0	28.0	19.4	13.4	100.0%
Total response	13.9	24.7	28.2	20.4	12.9	100.0%

If we compare the 1973-74 and 1974-75 surveys on their distribution of "sudden" decisions by grade we note that the same pattern emerges (i.e., under-representation in years 1, 2 and 5 and over-representation in years 3 and 4). But the imbalance, the difference between the percentage in that response and the percentage of that group in the sample is much greater. The earlier survey included the dropouts from grades 9 and 10 of only the two big city boards in the sample. However (combined) these systems represented about two-thirds of the sample, so the grade differences should not be as great as those seen below.

The percentage distributions for 1973-74 comparable for those above were as follows:

	Year					
Timing of decision	1	2	3	4	5	total
Sudden decision	3.1	4.7	51.6	28.1	12.5	100.0 %
Over a long time	4.7	12.1	38.6	27.3	17.3	100.0 %
Total response	4.3	11.4	39.5	27.5	17.3	100.0 %

The timing of the decision by achievement level

There is only a weak relationship between the achievement of the student and his response to this question. In 1974-75 there were 5189 dropouts for whom we have a reply to the question and an average mark (reported by the school). They represent over a quarter of the 20,027 dropouts reported from our sample of participating schools. The lower the achievement level the more likely that the dropout has been thinking of leaving school for some time. This response was given by 61.4 percent of the A students, and the percentage rose steadily to 71.4 percent of the Fs. We expected that the difference between achievement levels would be larger. The higher achievers are slightly under-represented among the long term decision-makers, but only very slightly as we see from the following:

Timing of decision	A	B	C	D	F	Total
Long term decision	1.2	8.6	29.4	33.7	27.1	100.0 %
Total sample	1.3	9.0	30.4	33.4	25.8	100.0 %

What should we conclude from these figures? That the average mark which the student earned just before leaving school has little to do with whether he decides suddenly to leave or has been considering the move for some time? The Ds and Fs were slightly more prone to have been brooding over leaving school than the higher achievers, but the difference between the groups of students is not great. Failing marks *per se* are not a good indicator to predict dropping out. In themselves, they do not seem to cause students to leave school, and when a failing student does drop out it takes him some time to come to that decision. In this he does not greatly differ from the high achieving dropout. In the 1973-74 survey an even higher proportion of the sample had decided to drop out only after thinking about it for some time (81.7 percent). That year the percentage distributions of the sample and the long term decision-makers were as follows:

Timing of decision	A	B	C	D	F	Total
Long term decision	0.9	6.4	25.1	35.3	32.3	100.0 %
Total sample	0.7	6.0	27.0	34.7	31.6	100.0 %

There has been little change over the two years. There was some change in the distributions of the dropouts by achievement level (proportionately fewer As, Bs, and Cs, a higher number of Ds and Fs) but that does not concern us here.

A shift in the importance of specific changes which influenced dropouts of specific achievement levels *does* seem to have taken place over the two years. In the earlier survey no A level students specified a disturbing change. Although teacher and staff changes were equally important overall each year, in 1973-74 the under-representation of the F students among those distressed by teacher changes was the reverse of what we had expected. That category represented 30.4 percent of the changes specified; it involved 33-35 percent of the Bs, Cs and Ds, but only 20 percent of the changes which were specified by the Fs. In 1974-75 there was some over-representation among the Fs listing disturbing teacher changes (36.2 percent of the Fs were in this category). That year the under-representation was among the Bs. For the specified disturbing course changes in 1974-75 there was no real representation of A students (only 5 out of 233). The F responses are of the most interest — 58 cited specific disturbing changes, more than a third were teacher changes, they had some criticism of the credit system, and all the complaints about rules, etc., came from F level students.

As we have done in previous sections, from these data we shall estimate the number of dropouts from Ontario secondary schools in 1974-75 who might well have been (a) influenced by some recent change in a school condition, (b) were not so influenced, but who did make a sudden decision to leave, and (c) were not so influenced and whose decision to leave had matured over a long period of time. We shall use the total dropout estimated figure of 47,762, and assume that all the unknowns are distributed in the same proportions as the knowns; i.e., the unknowns are dropouts not represented in the sub-sample of 7163 — the ones who were reported but did not respond to our questionnaire that year, and those who responded but did not reply to this question. The same assumption is made for all the sub-estimates, i.e., in using the sub-sample of 5189 to represent response by achievement level, we assume that all the unknowns would have the same percentage response in their replies to this question, and that the distribution of their average marks would be similar to those which were reported. Note that totals may not sum to 100 percent and estimated sub-totals may not be precisely accurate to the estimated total of 47,762; this is due to rounding.

The same estimating procedure is followed — 47,762 is related to the percentage totals of the sample(s) to obtain estimated totals and then the percentages within each category are used to obtain the estimated figure for each cell, e.g.:

6. 6 percent will have been influenced by a recent change (6.6 percent of 47,762 = 3152).

27. 9 percent were not influenced by a recent change but did make a sudden decision (27.9 percent of 47,762 = 13,326).

65. 5 percent were not influenced by a recent change; they had been considering leaving school for a long time (65.5 percent of 47,762 = 31,284).

For the sub-estimates we used tables 43, 44 and 45 to derive the following:

Estimated total Ontario dropouts 1974-75 by reply on the influence/timing of decision question and sex:

	Male	Female
Influenced by a change	1,828	1,324
Not influenced, decision sudden	7,289	6,037
Not influenced, decision not sudden	17,488	13,796
Total	26,605	21,157

Estimated total Ontario dropouts 1974-75 by reply on the influence/timing of decision question and year (or grade) left

	Year				
Influence/timing	1	2	3	4	5
Yes	397	784	828	706	438
No, decision sudden	1759	3198	3878	2958	1532
No, decision not sudden	4473	7821	8760	6038	4192
Total	6629	11,803	13,466	9702	6162

Estimated total Ontario dropouts 1974-75 by reply on the influence/timing of decision question and achievement level of dropout

Influence/timing	A	B	C	D	F
Yes	63	328	952	1015	796
No, decision sudden	213	1306	4411	4371	3025
No, decision not sudden	375	2690	9197	10,543	8488
Total	651	4324	14,560	15,929	11,307

Did the parents approve the decision to leave school?

This question did not appear in the 1972-73 survey. It was given a slightly different form on the 1973-74 questionnaire from the one used in 1974-75. The amended wording was chosen when we realized that the 1973-74 form did not allow for all the variations of one or other (or both) parents approving or disapproving the decision. First we shall present the evidence of the 1974-75 survey and then compare its findings with the earlier ones. The reader should keep in mind that these are the students' reports; we have no parental statements by which the accuracy of their opinions might be assessed. To the question, "Did your mother approve of your leaving school?", there were 6779 replies; 62.1 percent of the mothers approved the decision, 30.0 disapproved, and 7.9 did not care one way or the other. Twelve percent of the students who returned questionnaires did not reply to the question.

To the question, "Did your father approve of your leaving school?", there were 6033 replies; 60.6 percent of the fathers approved, 29.3 percent disapproved, and 10.1 percent did not care one way or the other.

According to these data it is apparent that the dropouts' mothers were slightly more in sympathy with the dropping out decision than their fathers. But on the whole almost two-thirds approved the decision. In the 1973-74 survey we had a very similar finding, as the following percentage distributions show:

	1973-74	1974-75	
Student's response		Mother	Father
Parents approve	58.2	64.2	62.5
Father only approved	0.2		
Mother only approved	0.6		
Parents disapprove	37.6	27.8	27.3
Did not care	1.2	8.0	10.2
Indifferent/undecided	1.6		
Other	0.6		
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Parental approval/disapproval by sex of student

There were 6696 students whose sex we know, who replied to the question about mother's approval or disapproval of the decision to drop out. Mothers approved the decision more commonly for girls than boys. Although female dropouts form only 43.5 percent of this sub-sample, they represent 45.3 of the group receiving mothers' approval. Although the 'approved' group represent only 62.1 percent of the sample, 64.7 percent of the approved category are female dropouts. The reverse is true of the males. They represent 60.8 percent of the disapproval category, although they form less than 57 percent of the sub-sample. Mother disapprovals represent about 30 percent of the total sub-sample, but over 32 percent of the disapprovals were reported by male dropouts. The response by sex on mother's approval/disapproval is statistically significant. Apparently mothers in Ontario generally disapprove more of their sons leaving school than of their daughters taking this decision, although over all they cannot be said to be disapproving because 62.1% approved the decisions (see figure 20). This finding is in accord with the traditional stereotype of the 'value' of education (or the 'need') being considered greater for the male than the female.

There were 5966 whose sex we know who replied to the question about whether fathers approved or disapproved of the decision to drop out. There is a weak statistical significance in the relationship between the sex of the dropout and father's attitude to leaving school. In other words to a greater extent than mothers, fathers view the decision of their child to leave school in much the same way whatever its sex (see figure 21). On the whole they approve (60.6 percent) and the representation by sex among the approved group is about the same as the sex ratio in the sample.

Figure 20 MOTHERS' APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL BY SEX, 1974-75

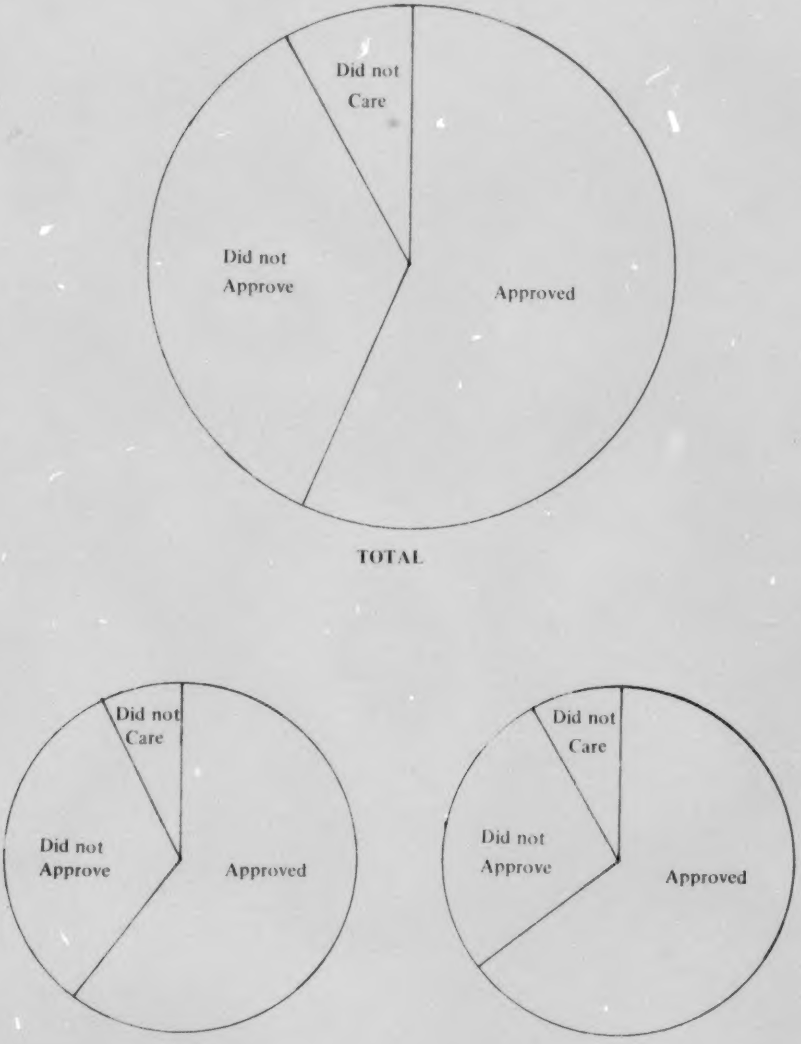
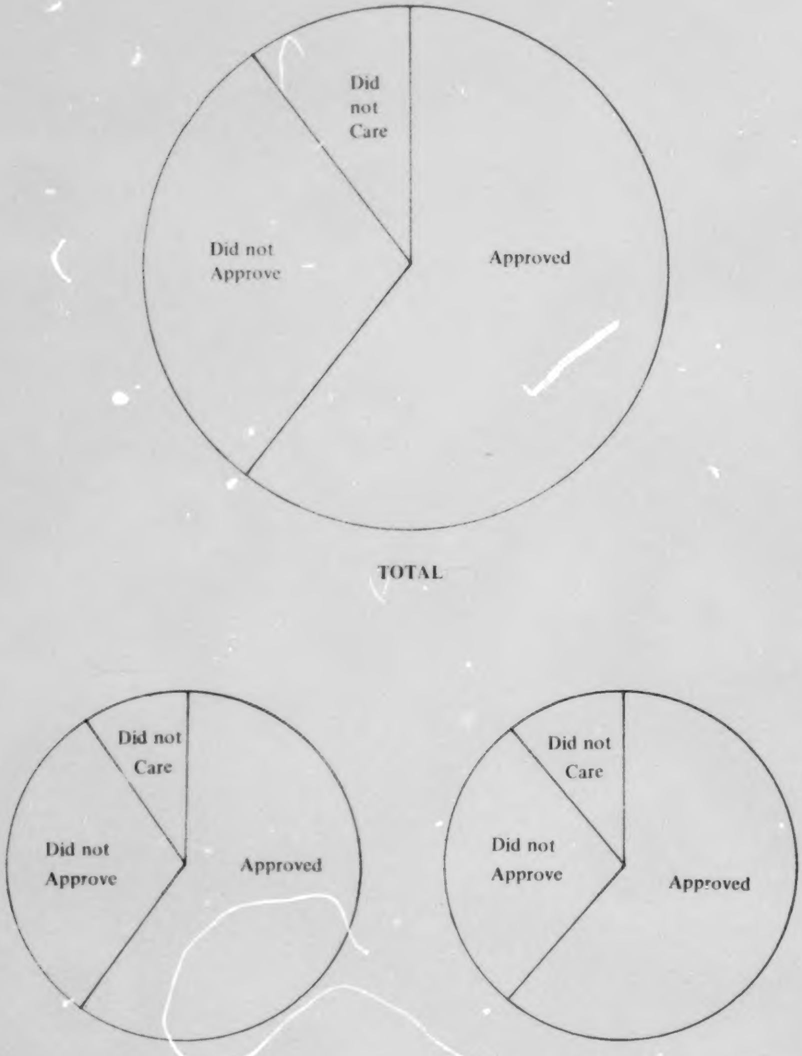


Figure 21 FATHER'S APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL BY SEX, 1974-75



The 1973-74 survey question did not differentiate between the fathers' and mothers' attitudes if they were in agreement. That year we had 931 dropouts whose parents approved their decision. For 43 of these dropouts we do not know the sex, of the rest 496 were males, and 393 were females. If we add to those figures the dropouts whose mothers only approved, and those whose fathers only approved, we have a rough comparison with the 1974-75 figures: 63.9 percent of the parents approved their daughter's decision to leave school, 56.2 percent approved their son's decision. Since female dropouts only represent about 41 percent of the sub-sample, if their parents' response had been similar to that of the boys' parents they should have received only 38.9 percent parental approval.

Parental approval/disapproval of decision to leave school by year left

In the 1974-75 study the relationship between fathers' approval to drop out and school grade was statistically significant. The relationship between mothers' approval and school grade was not significant. The approvals/disapprovals are shown in figures 22 and 23. In other words, the fathers have a decided opinion which varies, depending upon the school grade which their sons or daughters are leaving. Mothers' opinions do not vary much by grade. Fathers' disapproval peaks in grade 11 (although almost two-thirds approve anyway, whatever the grade). Both mothers and fathers seem to have some image of a minimum reasonable length of time to stay in school — and it is around the grade 11 mark. There is also (what, in our opinion, seems to be) an irrational level of approval for quitting grade 13. Having had their children come so far, so successfully, why approve dropping out a few months before the end? In the sub-sample for fathers the approval category is 60.9 percent. However, the grade 13 dropouts record 66.3 percent approval (i.e., 66.3 percent of the grade 13 dropouts reported that their fathers approved their decision). Their mothers' approval was even higher (67.0 percent *v.* 62.4).

In 1973-74 the relationship between parents' approval and the grade the student was leaving had no statistical significance (see figure 24).

Parental approval/disapproval by level of achievement

There is only weak statistical significance between mothers' ap-

Figure 22 MOTHER'S APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL BY YEAR, 1974-75

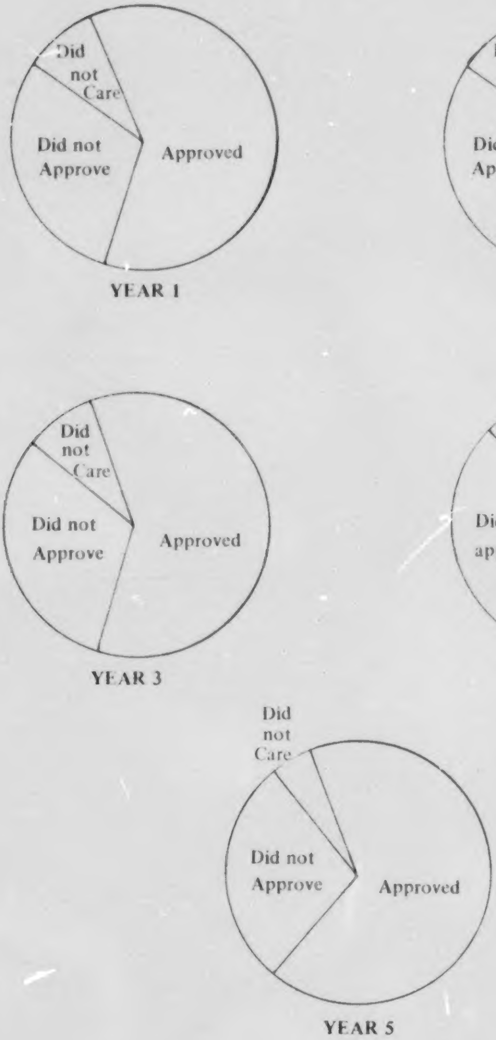
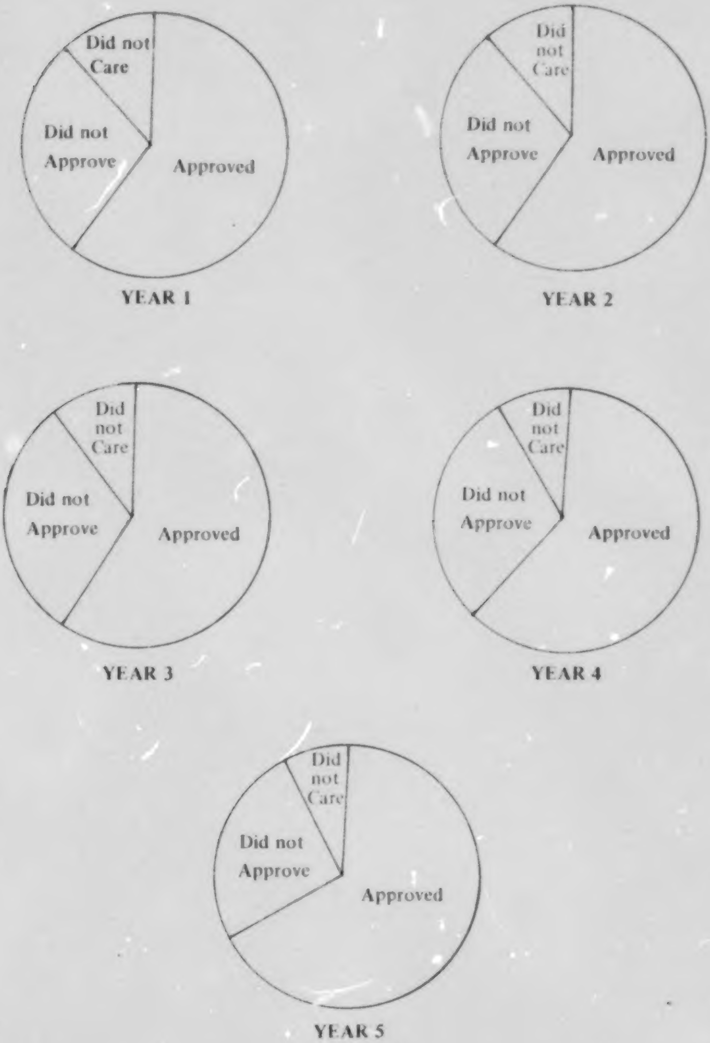


Figure 23 DROPOUTS–FATHER'S APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL BY YEAR OF PROGRAM, 1974-75



YEAR 1

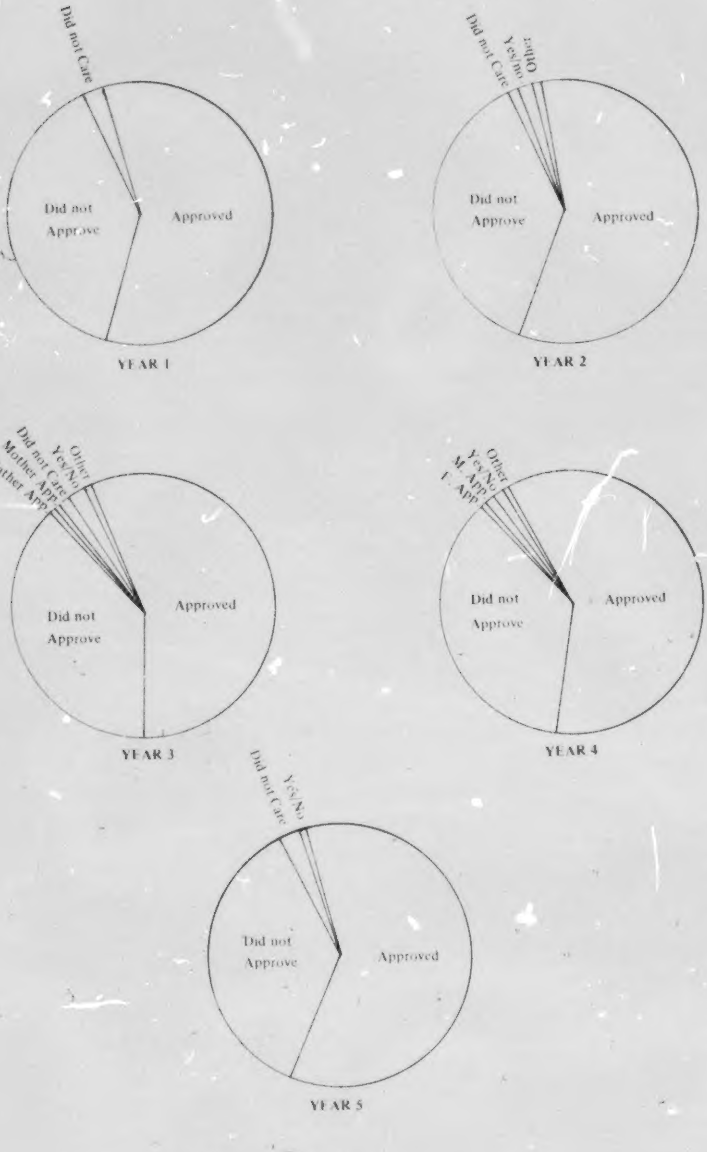
YEAR 2

YEAR 3

YEAR 4

YEAR 5

Figure 24 DROPOUTS – PARENTAL APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL BY YEAR, 1973-74

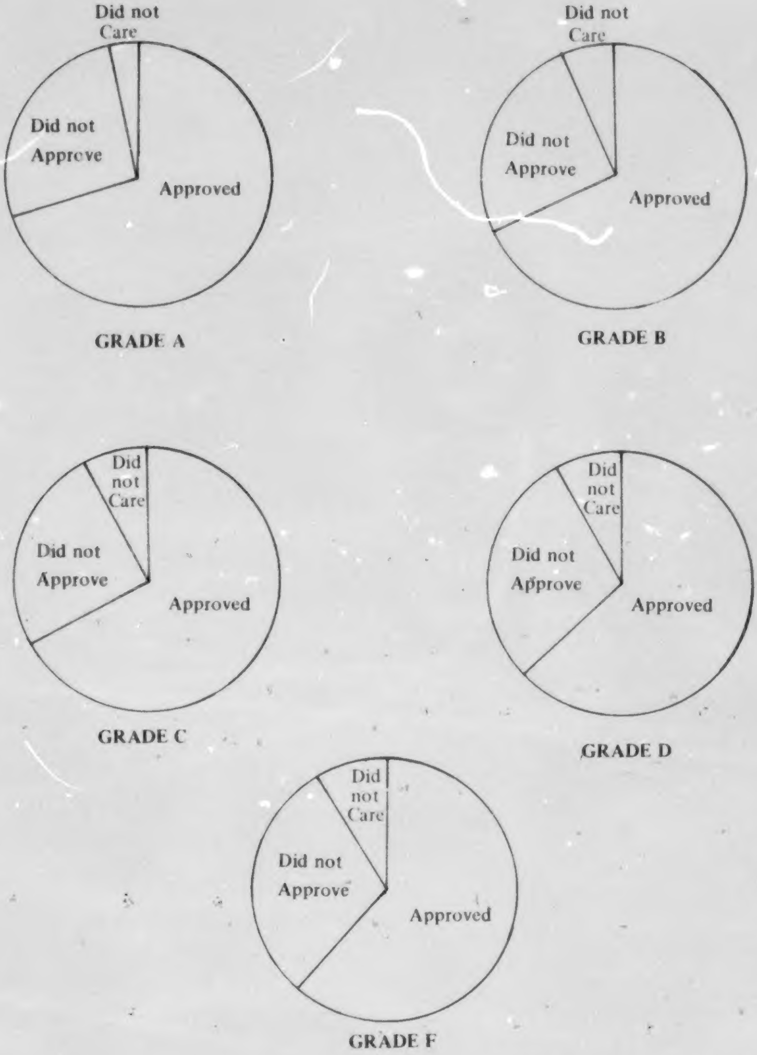


proval/disapproval of the dropout decision and their children's achievement level. Nevertheless it is noticeable that the level of approval actually *increases steadily* the higher the students' grades (which, in our opinion, appears to be a completely irrational response). Here you have A level students who had demonstrated the type of skills which make for academic success, and their mothers approve their leaving in the midst of their final secondary school year. Over 70 percent of the small group of A level dropouts report that their mothers approved their leaving school, whereas for the other achievement categories mother's approval represents 68.3 percent of the Bs, 67.6 of the Cs 63.4 of the Ds and 61.7 of the Fs. Lest it is thought that this type of response was confined to mothers, it should be noted that the same type of distribution was given by fathers; approvals were 72.2 percent of the As, 64.9 of the Bs, 65.6 of the Cs, 62.1 of the Ds and 60.0 of the Fs (see figures 25 and 26). For the fathers there was only a weak statistical relationship between approval/disapproval and the achievement level of the dropout. And for guardians there was no statistical significance in the relationship between their approval/disapproval of the dropout decision and the achievement level of the student. They also show highest approval for the A students leaving secondary school; approval 66.7 percent of the As, 57.1 of the Bs, 63.5 of the Cs, 62.3 of the Ds and 56.1 of the Fs.

The findings differ only slightly from one year to another but the 1973-74 data are statistically significant. The parents' approvals were given to 87.5 percent of the small number of As. Then there are fewer approvals for the Bs than one would expect (52.1 percent of the Bs had approval whereas they form 59.2 percent of the subsample). For the other achievement levels the approvals were more or less as expected.

In summary: Parents approve of their children dropping out of secondary school in about 60 percent (or more) of the cases, regardless of which survey year we are checking or what base for analysis is being used. Mothers are even more approving of daughter's dropping out than of their sons'. Fathers (while approving) have a greater tendency to treat both their sons' and daughters' decisions to leave school in similar fashion. The distribution of approvals by grade and by achievement level is most unfortunate. Parents appear to be making highly irrational responses — at least as reported by their children. The higher the grade the student is

Figure 25 MOTHER'S APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL BY ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL 1974-75



GRADE A

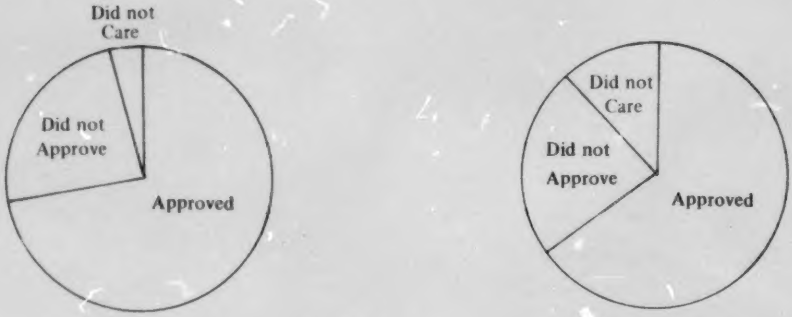
GRADE B

GRADE C

GRADE D

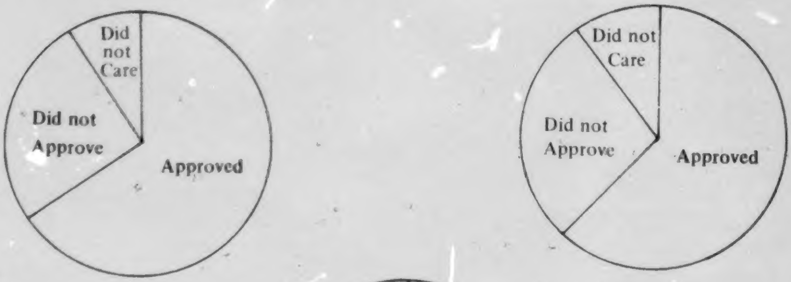
GRADE F

Figure 26 FATHER'S APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL BY ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL 1974-75



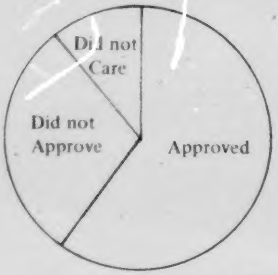
GRADE A

GRADE B



GRADE C

GRADE D



GRADE F

leaving, the greater the approval of the decision to leave. The higher the dropout's marks, the greater the approval.

Following our usual estimating procedure and using the total Ontario dropout figure of 47,762, in 1974-75 there would have been 29,660 dropouts whose mothers approved their decision, 14,329 whose mothers disapproved, and for 3773 the mothers did not care one way or the other; 28,896 had fathers who approved, 14,042 fathers who disapproved, and for 4824 the fathers did not care one way or the other.

The 47,762 dropouts would be distributed in a ratio of 56.5:43.5 males to females (i.e., 26,986 to 20,776), on the basis of the responses to the mother's approval question. An estimated 16,246 of these males had mothers who approved their dropout decision, 8,689 had disapproving mothers and 2,051 of the mothers were indifferent to the decision. An estimated 13,442 of these females had mothers who approved their dropout decision. 5,589 had disapproving mothers and for 1,724 the mothers did not care one way or the other.*

On the basis of the father's approval question the 47,762 estimated Ontario total dropouts would be distributed in a ratio of 57.8:42.2 males to females (i.e., 27,606 to 20,156).
An estimated 16,564 of these males had fathers who approved their dropout decision, 8,392 had disapproving fathers and for 2,650 the fathers did not care whether they stayed in school or not. An estimated 12,376 of these females had fathers who approved their dropout decision, 5,603 had disapproving fathers and for 2,176 the fathers did not care whether they stayed in school or not.

INTERVIEW DATA ON PARENTAL APPROVAL

The wording of the questions about parents' approval and peer group influence varied according to whether the interview was with a working, unemployed, studying or "other" dropout. Much of the analysis which follows, therefore, is by "destination category". All the interviewed dropouts were asked:

Did you discuss your plans to leave school with your parents?

Most did. The percentage distribution of responses (apart from those who had an "other" or "personal" destination) was as follows:

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*Due to rounding, the estimated sub-totals will not sum to the estimated totals.

Destination	Yes %	No %	No reply %	Row Total No.	 %
Working	74.4	24.6	1.0	207	54.6
Unemployed	71.8	26.2	1.9	103	27.2
Returned to school	61.4	34.1	4.5	44	11.6
Studying elsewhere	56.0	16.0	28.0	25	6.6
Total	71.0	25.6	3.4		100.0
N =	269	97	13	379	

Those who had returned to some form of study showed less disposition to discuss with their parents the decision to leave school than those who were working or were unemployed when interviewed. All were then asked:

What was their reaction?

The 282 replies* are interesting in view of the questionnaire reports of strong approval. It is not that these dropouts reported disapproval, so much as that the approval was expressed in a more restrained form. It is evident that many parents 'gave up' rather than approved. The most common response was that the parents agree that the students "are old enough to decide for themselves, to know their own minds". The percentage distribution of responses was as follows:

Parents' reaction	Working %	Un-employed %	Returned to school %	Studying elsewhere %	Total No.	 %
No response	21.3	26.2	34.1	44.0	97	25.6
Approved	14.0	11.7	13.6	16.0	51	13.5
Decide for myself	22.7	25.2	25.0	12.0	87	22.9
No reaction — neutral	4.8	4.9	0.0	0.0	15	4.0
Disappointed	20.3	14.6	18.2	8.0	67	17.7
Strongly opposed	14.0	16.5	6.8	20.0	54	14.2
Other	2.9	1.0	2.3	0.0	8	2.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0		100.0
N =	207	103	44	25	379	

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*Although only 269 *said* they discussed the move with their parents, 282 reported the parents' reactions.

According to these data only 13.5 percent of the parents actually *approved;* a larger proportion were disappointed (17.7 percent) and strongly opposed (14.2). Approval was highest for students who had entered other educational programs (16.0 percent) and lowest for those whose were unemployed (11.7). Note should be taken of the time lag between the questionnaire response and the interview. The questionnaire was filled in shortly after dropping out; the interview came several months later. Perhaps the students' perceptions of their parents' attitudes were accurate but the parental response changed in the intervening months as the dropout decision was shown to have been a good move or a poor move. The "strongly opposed" category is of interest; five of the 25 who were studying elsewhere reported that their parents had strongly disapproved of their decision to leave school; only three out of the 44 who had returned to school. This does not suggest that it was strong parental disapproval which drove the re-entrants back to school. The 97 students who said they had not discussed with their parents the intention to drop out of school before the decision was made, were asked:

Why not?

There are 93 replies, but in almost all "destinations" the largest category was "other" — i.e., the reasons are so varied that the interviewers could not group them into our code categories. We grouped them as follows:

1. My parents always wanted me to leave school anyway. ("They've been telling me to leave". "There was no need to consult them because it's been clear for some time that they thought I should leave".)
2. My parents are indifferent to my schooling. ("They don't care what I do". "I'm old enough to make these decisions for myself". "They think I should make these decisions". "They say its up to me to decide".)
3. I don't (can't) talk to my parents about anything. ("As soon as we talk about anything important we fight, so we just don't talk anymore".)
4. Other.

The percentage response by these groupings is shown on the next page.

Students' response	Working %	Un employed %	Returned to school %	Studying elsewhere %	Total No.	Total %
N.R.	77.4	74.7	66.0	80.0	286	75.5
1	1.4	1.0	4.5	0.0	6	1.6
2	2.4	9.7	0.0	0.0	15	3.9
3	0.0	0.0	15.9	16.0	11	2.9
4	18.8	14.6	13.6	4.0	61	16.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	379	100.0

They were then asked:

Was the importance of schooling stressed by your parents while you were growing up?

The common reply was "yes". One hundred and ninety-eight of the working-dropouts answered the question; 81.2 percent came from homes where the importance of schooling had been stressed. One hundred of the 103 unemployed-dropouts replied, 80.6 percent in the affirmative; 43 of the 44 who had returned to school replied, 88.6 percent in the affirmative; 19 of the 25 who had entered other educational institutions replied, all in the affirmative.

What should we conclude from this almost universal stress on the importance of schooling in families where the youngsters have dropped out of secondary school? How does this accord with their initial reports (on the questionnaire) that their parents approved their leaving school? There seems to be some inconsistency between the parents' reported attitude to schooling and their reported actions when their students want to leave secondary school before completing their programs.

For those who had *not* returned to some form of study the next question was:

How do your parents feel now that you have left school?

The interviewer had five categories into which to fit the students' replies: "They are pleased", "They are resigned", "They still want me to return", "I don't know how they really feel, we don't talk", "other".

The most common reply was that parents were resigned. Almost half (48.1 percent gave it. More parents were still urging their children to return to school than were "pleased" that they were out of school. Quite a few "did not talk about it" (i.e., the question is closed). The responses differ by sex; the percentage distributions were as follows:

Student's response	Working		Unemployed		
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	Total
N.R.	3.4	1.1	6.7	4.7	3.6
Pleased	12.8	16.9	5.0	4.7	11.3
Resigned	52.1	56.2	36.7	37.2	48.1
Want me to return	23.9*	20.2	35.0	44.2	27.7
We don't talk	6.8	4.5	13.3	9.3	7.7
Other	1.7	1.1	3.3	0.0	1.6
Total	100.0*	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	57.0	43.0	58.3	41.7	
N =	207		103		310

*Includes one for whom sex is not known but who has been counted as male.

The fact that their sons and daughters are working seems to have reconciled some parents to the dropout decision. They were "pleased" or at least "resigned". For the male working-dropouts 12.8 percent of the parents were pleased *v.* 5.0 for the male unemployed-dropouts; and 52.1 percent were resigned *v.* 36.7. For the female working-dropouts 16.9 percent of the parents were "pleased" *v.* 4.7 for the female unemployed-dropouts; and 56.2 percent were resigned *v.* 37.2. Thirty-five percent of the male unemployed-dropouts had parents who were urging them to return to school, *v.* 23.9 of the male working-dropouts. For the female unemployed-dropouts the contrast was even greater — 44.2 percent of their parents wanted them to return to school *v.* 20.2 of the parents of female working-dropouts.

Those who had returned to some sort of study program were asked:

How did your parents feel when you returned to school?

Most parents had reacted favourably — 79.5 percent of parents of those returning to school, 64.0 of those returning to other institutions. The rest were not hostile; they were perceived as being "neutral" or the student "did not know". Then we asked a series of questions to try to determine who, other than parents, had had an influence on the dropout decision. There had been suggestions that peer group influence was in the direction of the "counter culture" and this helped students decide to leave school. And some students in the pilot study had written letters suggesting they had been "eased out" of school (if not actually "kicked out") by ultimatums delivered by teachers, guidance personnel or principals. We, therefore, asked:

Did anyone at school have any influence on your deciding to leave school?

The questions were worded slightly differently for the group who had returned to study, so we shall deal with the two sets separately. The studying-dropouts were given the opportunity to reply "yes" or "no" and name the type of person. Most answered "no" (38 of the 44 who had returned to school, 86.4 percent; 18 of the 25 who had entered other institutions, 72.0 percent).

The employed and unemployed students were asked:

Did you discuss your leaving with anyone at your school? Who?

Their replies can best be seen by the following percentage distribution:

Student's response	Working %	Unemployed %	Total %
No reply	1.9	2.9	2.3
Yes (but no title given)	1.4	1.9	1.6
Teacher	19.8	14.6	18.1
Guidance personnel	32.4	31.1	31.9
Vice-principal	13.0	13.6	13.2
Combination of these school personnel	4.8	1.9	3.9
A friend	1.9	1.9	1.9
Other	0.5	0.0	0.3
No	24.2	32.0	26.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N =	207	103	310

Slightly more than one quarter had not discussed their intention to drop out with anyone at school. A few had discussed the question with school friends. The most commonly consulted group were the guidance personnel. Discussions with different school officials would likely take different forms, depending upon the roles being played. Teachers were described as trying to get to the root of a problem in academic performance, or behaviour in a specific class. Guidance personnel were concerned with the student's overall problems and choices. Administrators act as a court of last resort; usually they try to get the student to make a serious commitment one way or the other. The most common phrase describing consultation with the vice-principal or principal was, "He really laid it on the line. Make up your mind. Are you going to attend school regularly (improve your behaviour, take your studies seriously) or are you going to leave?"

This being the case the 'direction' of school influence at times might well vary. So we asked:

Did this person try to encourage you to stay in school?

The answer was that school personnel generally try to keep the student in school, but not uniformly so. There were cases where school personnel thought it best that the student leave (without actually expelling him). There seem to be occasions which are a fine distiction *de facto* between being "invited", "advised" and "told" to leave. *De jure* expulsion is a much more formal matter, none of these students had been officially expelled. One hundred and eighteen working-dropouts replied to this question; 62.7 percent reported that school personnel had tried to persuade them to stay in school, 27.1 that they had not; twelve dropouts gave some "other" explanation. Persuasion to stay in school was more commonly directed at females than males. Fifty-five unemployed-dropouts replied to this question; 54.5 percent reported that school personnel tried to persuade them to stay in school; 30.9 that they had not; there were eight "other" replies. In this case the persuasion to stay was very slightly higher for males than females. Working and unemployed-dropouts who had not discussed their plans with, or sought the advice of, school personnel were then asked:

Why didn't you?

The common reply was that it was a waste of time. However, there seem to be two ways in which it might be a "waste of time" and these were revealed by a little more questioning. Either the student's "mind was made up", so there was no point in discussing the matter further, or the teacher's (etc.) reaction was "known", so there was no point in seeking it. A few students took an even stronger line; they felt teachers (etc.) were "not interested", or they explained that they "don't get along with teachers (or guidance personnel, or principals, etc.)". Altogether 75 working-dropouts and 40 unemployed replied to the question (even though earlier only 50 working-dropouts and 33 unemployed had said that they had not consulted school personnel before they left the school). So it is evident that some who consult school personnel feel they are wasting their time and are only going through the formalities.

All the interviewed dropouts were asked:

Did your close friends have any influence over your decision to leave?

Most said "No". There were 325 negative and 33 (9.2%) affirmative replies. That seems to be a pretty decisive negation of the belief that the peer-influence counter-culture was encouraging students to drop out of school. There was little difference by "destination":

88.6 % of the working-dropouts denied that their friends had influenced them in making the decision,
96.9 % of the unemployed ones,
88.1 % of those who had returned to school, and
88.9 % of those who had entered other educational institutions

We asked the few who had at least consulted friends what had been the advice — to stay in school, or to leave? Fifteen of the employed-dropouts replied — ten had friends who had urged them to leave. Five of the unemployed ones replied — four had friends who had urged them to stay in school. Three of the studying-dropouts who had returned to school replied — all their friends had urged them to leave. One studying-dropout who had entered another educational institution replied — she had a friend who had urged her to leave school. In other words the number who admit that they consulted friends and were influenced by them is very small. By and large the advice was to leave school. The group that returned to studies was asked:

Did your friends have any influence over your decision to return?

On balance friends seem to have had less influence on the return to secondary school than on the decision to enter some other study program, but friends did not greatly influence either. Over 70 percent of the re-entrants answered "no", 64.7 percent of those studying elsewhere gave the same answer. Then they were asked what the influence was: All the advice was in favour of returning to studies — all the re-entrants to return to school and those studying elsewhere to enter that program. Whether the dropouts remember only that advice which accorded with their actual decision, or made their intention so clear that their friends were convinced, is a debatable point. In any case the unanimity is remarkable. The working and unemployed-dropouts were asked:

Did you leave school because your friends were leaving?

The common answer is "no"; 191 of the 198 employed-dropouts and 94 of the 96 unemployed who replied gave a negative answer. All the interviewed dropouts were asked:

What are most of your friends doing now?

"Most are still in school" was the common reply. Their percentage distribution was as follows:

Student's response	Working %	Un-employed %	Returned to school %	Studying elsewhere %	Total %
All working	4.1	2.1	11.4	21.1	5.3
Most working or looking for work	31.6	32.6	18.2	15.8	29.5
Most still in school	61.1	61.1	70.4	57.8	62.1
Other	3.0	4.2	0.0	5.3	3.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N =	198	95	44	19	356

"Friends in school" is a slightly more frequent response for the group who returned to school than for the others. Perhaps the attraction of returning to the setting of their friends had some influence. When students drop out of school they leave behind their social life as well as their study life. Even when they establish themselves in the work world most will admit that they miss their friends and the social contacts.

In summary: Most dropouts discuss their intentions to leave school with their parents before the decision is actually made. Parents' reactions do not seem to demonstrate "approval" so much as acquiescence. In a very large number of cases parents seem to be content (or resigned) to letting their youngsters make the dropout decision for themselves. Even though they cannot be said to approve, they do not seem to disapprove actively and in a determined fashion. There is surprisingly strong verbal evidence that education was stressed in these homes during the dropouts' formative years. But this stress does not seem to have had much influence. Whatever had been their initial reaction to the dropout decision, parents' current attitude (at the time of the interviews) varied according to whether the student was employed or unemployed. Most parents react favourably to the re-entrant's decision or the decision to enter some other educational institution. The latter they support financially.

We did not find that the influence of school personnel or of the dropouts' peers was as important as the influence of their parents. Those who had returned to study, for the most part, had not consulted school personnel before they left school and were not greatly influenced by them in their return. The working and unemployed group, on the other hand, seem to have consulted school personnel a little more frequently — particularly guidance personnel. But it is evident that some of this consultation was purely formal and its net effect was to 'firm up' the decision to leave school. When students had not consulted school personnel before they left they justified it by saying that they felt there was no point in further discussion, it was a waste of time.

Assessment of peer influence was made through a number of questions. There is not much evidence that these dropouts were influenced by the advice or example of their peers. Most specifically state that they were not influenced, that they did not even discuss their plans with friends, let alone seek their advice. Whatever the dropout's "destination" most of their friends are still in school. Since this was true of even more re-entrants to school then those of the other groups, it might be taken as evidence that their desire to be with their friends could well be one factor influencing their return to school. The evidence is not strong, but if there is peer influence operating it is the favour of being in school.

6

Future Plans

We wished to know the future plans of dropout students and how they expected to achieve them. Each survey asked them about their plans for "next September". We also wished to establish the number who would be returning to formal education, their reasons for doing so, and what the dropouts saw as their need for future education. These questions are also related to plans, formal study plans, only some of which may be realized. This chapter will discuss these questions by reporting and analysing all the questionnaire data on plans and the interview data which tried to explore why some plans went awry. We shall also explore how important the dropouts perceive educational plans to be and what they think will be required for success.

Question five on the 1974-75 questionnaire dealt with students' plans. Respondents were given space to record two plans, space to write in the name of the school (if they intended to return to a secondary school different from the one they had just left) and to write in "other" plans than the nine which we had specified. There was also a category: "Have no specific plans". The 1973-74 question was identical except for the choice: "no plans". The 1972-73 question had been somewhat differently worded. The revisions in the later questionnaires were suggested by the responses in that first year. Some of the specified types of plan in the later surveys were "write-in" responses on the first survey. We shall analyse the plans under three headings: "job-related", "study-related" and "personal or other". It is not surprising, since our specified plans directed the students' attention to working or studying, that these predominate. We did not ask general questions about the students' ambitions. In the interviews there was the opportunity to raise other types of plan but since the students were reminded of their questionnaire responses and the kinds of plan they had specified, overwhelmingly it was job, career and study plans (rather than personal or family plans) which were discussed. This is not to imply that dropouts do not have other types of plan, or that these are not important to them. But such types were unlikely to emerge given the format of the questionnaire and the interview schedule.

FIRST PLANS

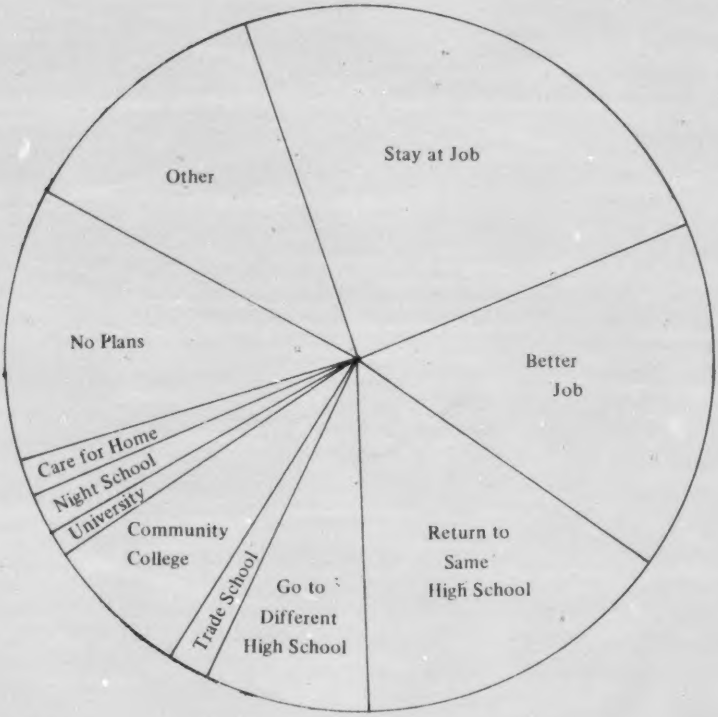
In 1974-75, 7494 students replied to the question about their plans. They represent 37.4 percent of the dropouts reported by the schools of our cooperating boards of education. The largest single group were those who intended to stay at their current job. The distribution was as follows (see also figure 27):

Plan	Number of Responses	Percentage
Stay at job	1788	23.9
Get a better job	1200	16.0
Return to the same secondary school	1109	14.8
Return to a different secondary school	558	7.4
Attend a trade school	133	1.8
Attend a community college (CAAT)	513	6.8
Attend university	75	1.0
Attend night school	152	2.0
Care for my home	126	1.7
Other	898	12.0
No specific plans	942	12.6
Total	7494	100.0

Combined the job-related plans represent more than one third of the total and the larger share of these indicate a surprising contentment with current employment. About 26 percent of the dropouts plan to continue their studies at what might be termed the same educational level (secondary school/trade school/night school). Some 3 percent plan to enter post-secondary institutions even though they have not completed the secondary level. The rather sad finding is that 12 percent have no plans.

In 1973-74, 1622 (49.1 percent) of the students replied to this

Figure 27 DROPOUTS – FIRST PLANS, 1974-75



question, and in 1972-73, 872 (30.5 percent). The rank ordering of the most common plans did not greatly change over the three years, as we see from the following:

	1974-75	1973-74	1972-73
Keep on with (or stay at) this job	1	1	1
Hope to have a better/different job.	2	2	2
Return to the same secondary school.	3	3	3
Return to different secondary school.	6	6	5
Attend trade school	9	8	7
Attend a community college.	7	5	4
Attend university.	11	9	6
Attend night school	8	7	9
Care for my house	10	N/A*	N/A*
Other	5	4	8
No plans	4	N/A*	N/A*

*Not specified that year.

Over these years the proportions represented by the most common reported plans show increasing discontent with the current job. The percentage of dropouts intending to stay at their jobs reduced from 39.8 to 23.9. Perhaps this is a function of the different school grades which the dropouts left. The first survey only covered dropouts from grades 11 to 13 and the second only covered the five secondary school grades for the two large city boards (about two-thirds of the sample). The expectations of getting a better job had also reduced over these years, perhaps realistically in light of the increase in the "unemployed looking for work" category which was discussed earlier. The percentage planning to return to the same school stayed relatively stable (15 to 16 percent). Those expecting to return to a different school grew. Those planning to attend a CAAT decreased somewhat. The most common plans in the three surveys were as follows:

	1974-75	1973-74	1972-73
Keep this job	23.9	30.1	39.8
Get a better job	16.0	16.6	27.3
Return to same secondary school	14.8	16.1	15.3
Return to different secondary school	7.5	5.5	5.5
Study at a CAAT	6.8	7.7	8.3

For the rest of this chapter we shall discuss the students' first plans by broad type.

First plans by sex

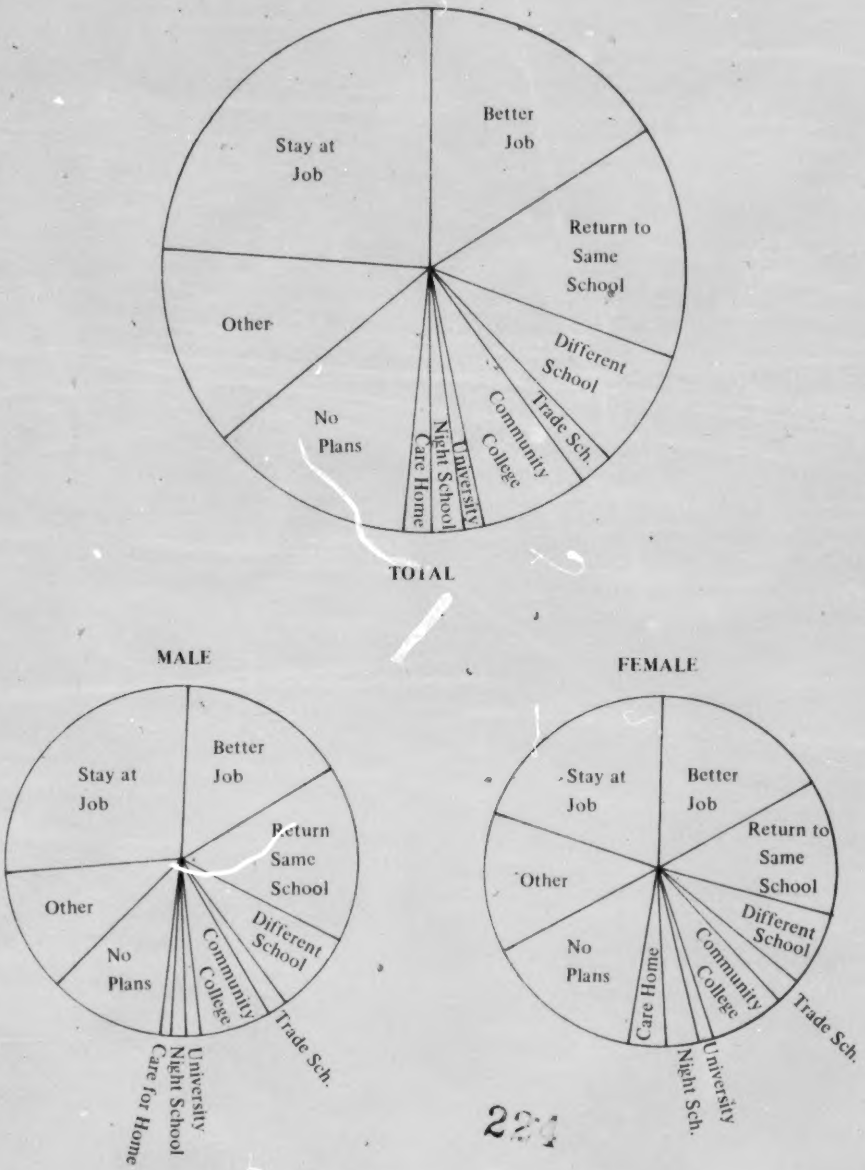
In 1974-75, in the sample as a whole, most of the respondents planned to stay at their current jobs — this was the largest absolute number of replies, regardless of sex (see figure 28). However, boys were over-represented in this category, e.g., they formed 63.6 percent of the ctegory although they were only 56.1 of the sub-sample. The girls disproportionately intend to try for a better job. The two job plan groups (combined) represent 42.6 percent of the males and only 36.3 of the females. This finding was consistent with the general finding that the male dropouts are more employment-oriented and have found better occupations. To a greater extent than the girls, (1) they left school *because* they had found a job, (2) their prime current activity is "work", and (3) their prime plans are to stay at their current job or seek a better one.

Taking the six study-oriented plan responses together we find that 33.9 percent of the sample reported such a plan as their first — slightly more, proportionately, of the males than the females but the difference was not as great as expected, 35.0 percent of the males reported a study plan as their first, 32.5 of the females. However, if we look at study locations we notice considerable sex difference. The males were more prone to return to the same secondary school or to plan to attend a university. The females were over-represented among those planning to attend a trade school (which we did not expect), a community college, or a night school.

In 1974-75 there was a minority of students who reported "personal" plans on their questionnaires. For the sample as a whole, combining all categories, about a quarter of the respondents gave such replies. They will be analysed with the "open-ended" plans — i.e., those written in the space provided. Although combined they represent a sizeable group the plans are so varied that each specific category is small. The largest, which was one we had specified, was "to care for my home" — overwhelmingly a female response (given by 125 dropouts, 1.7 percent of the sample). In all the sub-samples, whatever the base for analysis, there was a highly significant relationship, statistically, between the sex of the dropout and the kind of plan reported on the questionnaire.

The 1973-74 findings on first plans were very similar. The group

Figure 28 DROPOUTS – FIRST PLANS BY SEX, 1974-75



planning to stay at the current job formed an even greater percentage of the total and the males were over-represented. Males were also more frequently (than would be expected) planning to return to the same secondary school, a trade school or a community college. Females were over-represented among those intending to return to a different secondary school or to study at night school.

First plans by year of program

In 1974-75 there were 7138 students who replied to this question for whom we know the school grade. Their distribution is shown graphically in figure 29. Plans vary considerably according to the school year left, and the distribution of these two variables is statistically highly significant. Grade 9 students were under-represented in the job plans (36.5 percent of them reported job plans *v.* 39.8 of the sample, for the two job plan categories combined), and also under-represented in the study plans (30.3 percent reported such plans *v.* 34.1 of the sample, for the six study plan categories combined).

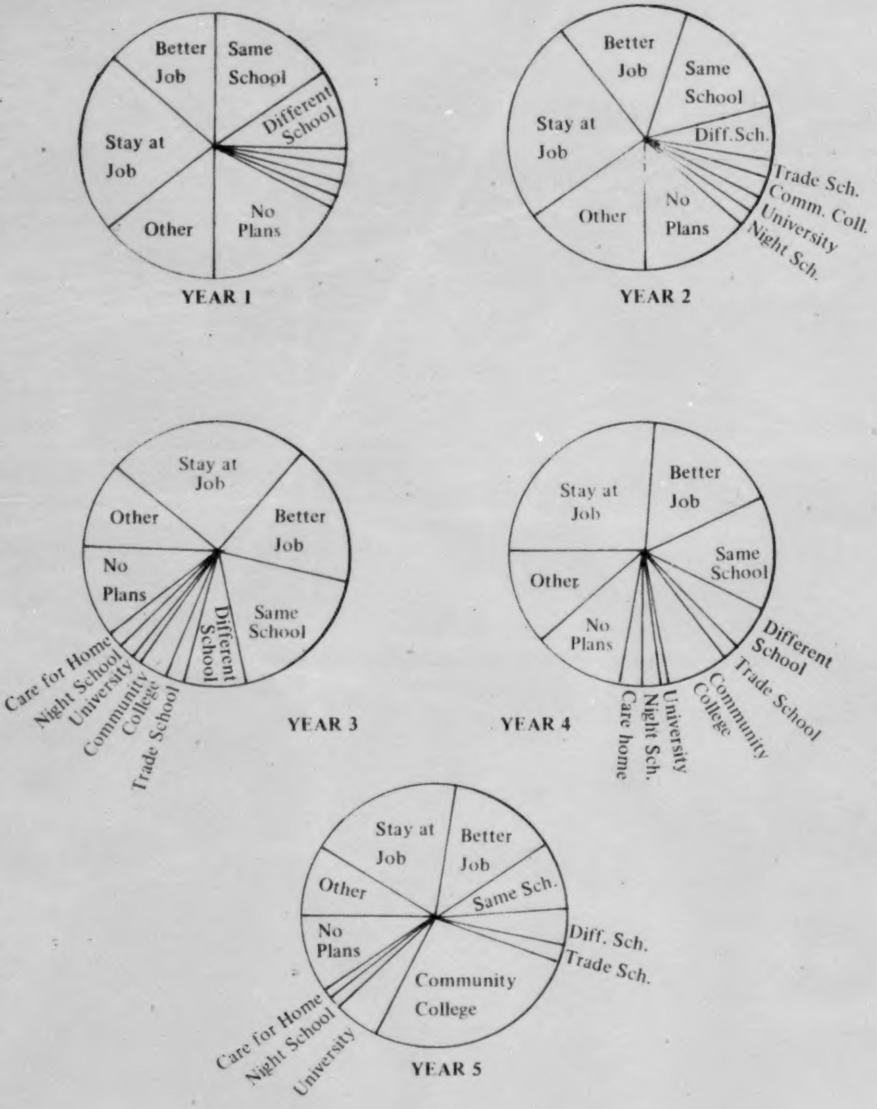
The grade 13 dropouts were well over-represented on the (combined) study-oriented plans; the grade 11s and 12s over-represented on the job-oriented plans. The easiest way to see the difference is by checking their percentage distributions (the two job plan categories have been combined, the six study plan categories have been combined). The distributions for the five grades are given first and then for the upper three grades only.

	Year					
Plans	1	2	3	4	5	Sample
Job-oriented	36.5	39.6	43.1	42.9	31.5	39.8%
Study-oriented	30.3	30.3	33.1	32.2	49.5	34.1%

The findings for the 1973-75 survey are not precisely comparable because only the two city boards included their grade 9s and 10s. The percentage distributions comparable to those shown above were as follows:

Plans	1	2	3	4	5	Sample
Job-oriented	40.3	43.5	45.1	55.4	42.5	47.1%
Study-oriented	31.6	39.9	39.3	31.2	45.2	37.9%

Figure 29 DROPOUTS – FIRST PLANS BY YEAR, 1974-75



YEAR 1

YEAR 2

YEAR 3

YEAR 4

YEAR 5

	Year			
Plans	3	4	5	Sample
Job-oriented	45.1	55.4	42.5	47.9%
Study-oriented	39.3	31.2	45.2	37.8%

That year the grade 12s were considerably over-represented among dropouts having job-oriented plans and the grade 13s among those with study-oriented plans. In the 1972-73 survey only the upper three grades were covered. Their comparable percentage distributions were:

	Year			
Plans	3	4	5	Sample
Job-oriented	70.8	69.7	53.3	67.1%
Study-oriented	28.6	29.9	46.2	32.5%

That year the whole sample was considerably more job-oriented in its plans, but the grade 11 and 12 dropouts were disproportionately so inclined. The grade 13 dropouts were over-represented among those with study plans.

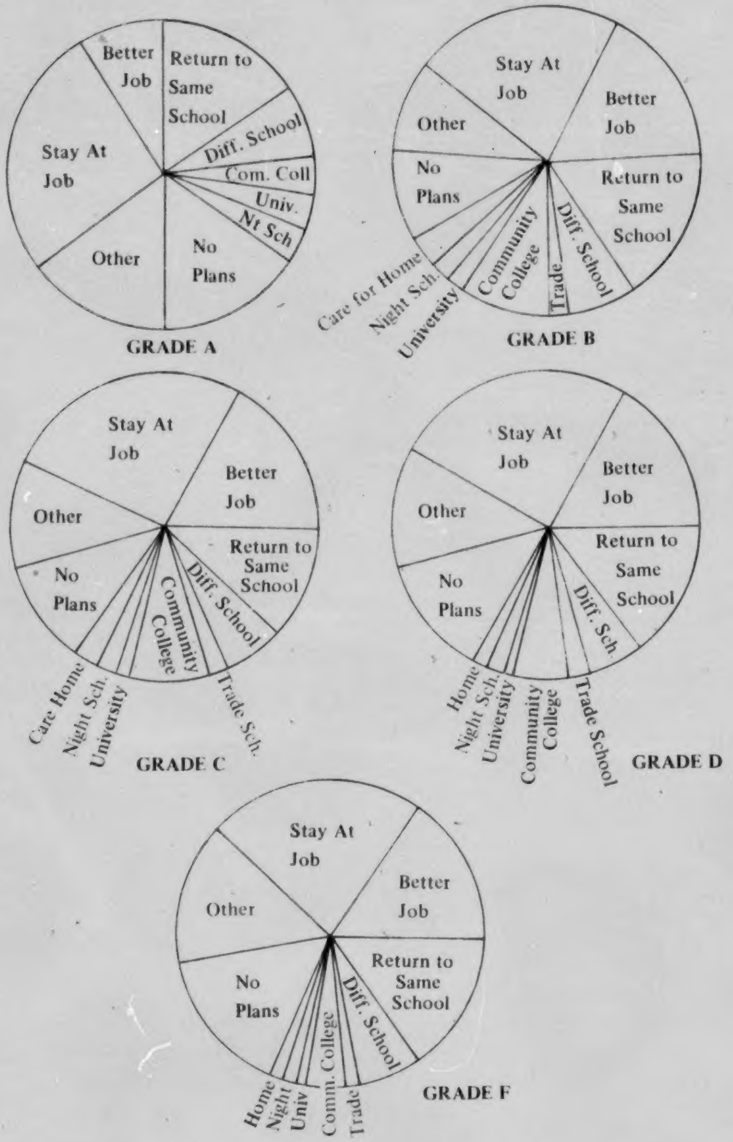
First plans by achievement level

In 1974-75 there were 5382 respondents for whom we have average marks. Their distribution is shown graphically in figure 30. The A and B students were over-represented among those with study plans, the C and D students over-represented among those with job-oriented plans. This may be seen from the percentage distributions below (the two job categories have been combined and the six study ones):

Plans	A	B	C	D	F	Sample
Job-oriented	34.2	38.3	43.4	41.7	38.4	40.9%
Study-oriented	34.2	38.6	31.3	31.9	30.1	32.0%

In 1973-74 since the entire sample was much more job-oriented in its plans (48.3 percent gave one of the two job responses), it was not surprising that all the achievement levels, except F, were over-represented among the job plans. The higher the achievement level the greater the job orientation. Thus the two job plans (combined)

Figure 30 DROPOUT – FIRST PLANS BY ACHIEVEMENT 1974-75



GRADE A

GRADE B

GRADE C

GRADE D

GRADE F

represented 48.3 percent of the sub-sample of respondents but 57.1 of the As, 54.7 of the Bs, 54.0 of the Cs and 51.3 of the Ds. The As were also over-represented among the study plans (42.9 percent; the category in the sub-sample was 36.3). But it is surprising to note that the Fs were also over-represented (44.3 percent). It is difficult to decide the appropriate reaction to the latter finding. Should one applaud the failing dropout for persistence in putting forward study plans when history of academic achievement gives little hope for success? Or should one deplore the lack of realism in his plans? The percentages quoted are those for the total 1973-74 sample, including the dropouts from grades 9 and 10.

In 1972-73 the sub-sample was also much more job oriented in its plans than that of 1974-75 (67.1 percent of the respondents for whom we had an average mark). The As were over-represented (81.3 percent had job plans) but in absolute numbers they were very few. The Bs and Cs were under-represented in the job plans, the Ds just slightly lower than one would expect and the Fs over-represented, but not so much as the As. The percentage distribution on job plans was — sample 67.1 percent, As 81.3, Bs 60.7, Cs 64.3, Ds 66.2, Fs 70.5.

In summary: On their first plans the 1974-75 dropouts show decidedly less job orientation than had been manifested in the 1972-73 and 1973-74 surveys. This accords with out findings on current activity that a larger proportion of the dropouts each year were unemployed and looking for work — indeed that that group had trebled over the three years, ending as a sizeable minority (about 30 percent). Nevertheless, the group intending to stay in their current jobs were absolutely and proportionately the largest single plan category each year. That did not change.

When we grouped the plans as "job-oriented" or "study-oriented" we found the girls were slightly less prone to be job-oriented. The dropouts from grade 9 were under-represented on both the job and study plans (combined), and those from grade 10 on study plans. The 13s were more prone to have study plans, the 11s and 12s to have work plans. The job orientation of the 12s held true over the three surveys. In 1974, the higher the achievement level the more likely that the student would have a study rather than a job-oriented plan (except for the Fs who were under-represented on both). This was not true of the earlier surveys which had had high representation of job plans among the A level dropouts. The relationship between the plans a student makes and his/her sex, school grade and achievement level are all statistically highly significant.

Before we leave first plans, it should be noted that in 1974-75, 942 students specifically reported "no plans". For 929 of them we know the sex: 461 males (49.6 percent) and 468 females (50.4). That is a disproportionately large number of females. Dropouts from grade 9 were over-represented in the "no plan" category; 18.1 percent of the grade 9 respondents were in this group although only 12.6 percent of the sub-sample had no plans; the grade 9 students formed 20.2 percent of the "no plan" group although they were only 14.0 percent of the sub-sample. Dropouts from the three upper years were under-represented in this category. The grade 10s were also over-represented but to a lesser extent than the grade 9s. The A and F level students were over-represented among those with "no plans". Dropouts with "no plans" formed 15.2 percent of the As and 15.9 of the Fs although they represent only 12.9 percent of the respondents in the sub-sample. The As represent 1.7 percent of the dropouts without plans even though they were only 1.5 percent of the sub-sample, and the Fs represent 31.8 percent of that group even though F level students were only 25.8 percent of the sub-sample. It is distressing to see that the grade 9 and 10 and the failing students, particularly, seem to be the ones with no plans — neither job nor study plans.

There is, of course, a considerable difference between having a plan and carrying out a plan. And there appears to be a lack of realism about some of the plans put forward, as we can see from the interviews. Nevertheless if one has no plans or dreams at age 17 or 18 when will one have them?

Second plans

People generally have more than one future plan and, if one probes a bit, it is not difficult to discover that most people have a hierarchy of plans in order of preference and that some are of longer range than others. So although the questionnaire was quite cramped for space we not only specified a large number of plans, but also gave the students the opportunity to indicate a second plan and to write in others as they wished. There were 1744 second plans reported. It was expected that they would complement the first plans and this proved to be the case. Since keeping the same job, trying to obtain a better one and returning to school were the main first plans, they do not appear frequently as second plans. A large group specifically reported that they did not have a second plan (i.e., indicated that category; this does not refer to non-responses where the second plan choice was left blank). The most common second plan is some form of night school study. The distribution was as follows:

Second plans	Percentage response
Stay at job	1.0
Better job	2.0
Return to same secondary school	2.9
Return to different secondary school	1.7
Attend a trade school	9.1
Attend a community college	11.1
Attend a university	1.5
Attend night school	28.2
Care for home	5.0
No plans	31.7
Other	5.8
Total	100.0

Second plans by sex

There were 1718 students for whom we know sex and a second plan. As we found on the first plans, the males are over-represented among those with job plans. But this category is small in this sample. What is of greater interest (although not unexpected) is that males' second plans (generally after a first plan to stay at the current job or seek a better one) are heavily concentrated on "attending trade school", whereas females' second plans are to "attend night school". Males form 80 percent of the trade school response category although they are only 56 percent of this sub-sample; 12.9 percent of the males' second plans involve attending a trade school although this plan involves only nine percent of the sub-sample generally. Females form over 49 percent of the night school response category and they are only 43.7 percent of the sub-sample. Almost one third (31.9 percent) of the females' second plans involve attending night school whereas this plan involves only 28.2 percent of the sub-sample generally. There is statistically a highly significant relationship between the sex of the student and the second plan reported. Males more commonly admit they have no plans. They are over-represented on that item (58.5 percent of category *v.* 56.3 of the sample).

The 1973-74 figures corroborate those of 1974-75. That year there was a highly significant statistical relationship between the type of second plan reported and the sex of the dropout. The inclusion or exclusion of the grade 9 and 10 students does not change the picture much. The largest category of second plans was "to attend night school." In that year it was the males who were slightly over-represented on this choice. In 1973-74 a higher proportion indicated second job-related plans. This is in line with the findings on first plans, and the "return to school" second plans were higher as well.

The explanation for the latter is obvious — fewer that year planned to return to school as their *first* plan (15.6 percent and 5.5 *v.* 16.0 and 14.8). The explanation of the higher proportion with job-related plans in 1973-74 is not that it was a compensation choice. The plans of the earlier year show higher percentages for job-related plans as both first *and* second ones. This probably reflects higher levels of employment in 1973-74 than 1974-75.

Second plans by year of program

In 1974-75 there were 1651 dropouts who reported second plans for whom we know the grade of school left. The grade 9 dropouts were somewhat over-represented in the "better job" category and slightly so in the "return to same secondary school" category. Otherwise, they were under-represented in their second plans in the job-related and study-related ones (as they had been on their first choice of plans). The grade 13 dropouts were over-represented on some study categories as second plans, as they were over-represented on study plans (combined) as first plans. The community college study category, for example, had 24.6 percent of the grade 13s' second plans *v.* 11.0 percent for the sub-sample. Since the grade 12s had been so heavily over-represented on job-related first plans it is not surprising that their second plans are under-represented in the job categories. Their large over-representation was in the "night school" category (38.5 percent of the grade 12 second plans are in this category; the grade 11s are also concentrated there, but not to the same degree).

In the 1973-74 survey (all grades) there was not only a more frequent job-related second plan (as were first plans), but we find that the grade 9s were not under-represented (as was the case in 1974-75). The combined job-related second plans of the grade 9s represent 35.7 percent of their second plans *v.* 24.7 for the sub-sample generally. The grade 13s (again) are over-represented on the combined study plans (67.1 percent *v.* 65.1 for the sub-sample) but they are not over-represented in all study categories — only in those planning to attend CAATs (18.1 percent of the grade 13 plans, 7.0 of the sub-sample's second plans) and universities (4.3 percent *v.* 1.8).

Second plans by achievement level

In 1974-75 there were 1227 dropouts who reported second plans for whom we received an achievement grade (see table 46). There is no statistical significance between the grade the dropout left and his second plan. But in some cells the numbers are so small anyway, that a chi square is not a suitable test of significance. The absolute numbers do have some interest, however, if only to reveal unrealistic plans. For example, there were seven D and F level dropouts planning to attend university and another 70 planning to attend a CAAT — these are unlikely to be realized. There were 399 who reported as their second plan "no plans". Students at the low end of the achievement spectrum were over-represented among them. Note the following percentage distributions:

Second plans	A	B	C	D	F	Total
No plans	1.3	8.3	26.8	34.3	29.3	100.0%
Sub-sample	1.1	9.2	30.2	34.1	25.3	100.0%

In the 1973-74 survey, no A level dropout gave a second plan. In that year's sample there were 353 for whom we have a second plan and a reported average mark. Again there appears to be no statistical significance between the achievement level of the student and the second plan reported — which in itself gives food for thought, since there are many educational studies showing very high correlation between success in school, as measured by school marks, and success in further studies and the world of work. In these days there is little conviction about our ability to measure innate aptitude. The so-called IQ tests are achievement tests of a general nature — i.e., they are not linked to specific program content or even to discipline core content. But school marks are not standardized. There is variance from class to class and teacher to teacher in the assessment of the same subject at the same level.

There is systematic variance (i.e., predictable ranges) from school to school. The marks of a single teacher for the same test of the same children are not even stable over time (i.e., within the school year, in the same class). But even when we concede all criticisms or claims against school marks and test marks, and admit that they probably test to a large degree the youngster's 'learning proneness' (which is a combination of family conditioning and ability, modified by school experience), nevertheless, even when we enter all the *caveats* we are left with the fact that school marks have been, over the years, a good predictor of later success. Whatever the marks measure it is a set of conditions or qualities found to be present among the successful. This being the case, if dropouts' plans show no statistically predictable relationship to the youths' recorded achievement (which is not secret, it is known to the dropouts who are making the plans) then the evidence suggests that they make their plans without reference to their achievement record and their plans are unrealistic. They fly in the face of the evidence.

Again the absolute numbers are of interest (see table 47). Note how many D and F students "plan" (not *hope*, the question was specific) to get a better job. The Fs are over-represented, the As somewhat under-represented. Does the latter indicate undue modesty? Not really, just that their plan choices are in "study" categories, and this is realistic. They have already demonstrated their ability to study successfully. On the other hand, what are we to make of three youngsters with D and F average marks who plan to go to university and the eleven who plan to go to CAATs? Moreover, if these students demonstrated so little perseverance that they could not complete a school year under the relatively easy full-time study conditions of a secondary school, what probability of success should we attach to the 80 Ds and Fs who plan to undertake night school study while they are fully employed during the day?

Open ended plans

In the 1974-75 survey there were 998 plans written in on the questionnaires, and for 962 of these dropouts we know sex. As in the written-in responses to our other question, most of the plans could have been fitted into one of the specified categories. Their interest lies in the notes which many students attached to their questionnaires describing the details.

In 1974-75 the largest group of written-in plans could be paraphrased as "hope to find a job". In some cases the dropouts describe the planned activities which they think will translate the hope into reality. In view of the finding that the proportion of unemployed- dropouts rose over the three years of this study, we do not think this finding surprising. In 1973-74 the category was much smaller. In comparing tables it should be noted that the categories were listed in a different order in 1973-74, and that year there were nine instead of eight categories. Moreover, in 1973-74 the "no plans" were included with the "other" and there was also a category "undecided". In 1974-75 there was a category "in-service training/apprenticeship" which did not appear in the earlier year. The reader is reminded of the nature of these tabulations: Respondents wrote in plans in the space provided for "other". In some cases this consisted merely of one or two laconic words. In others students wrote a letter and attached it to the questionnaire. The written-in responses to the first two surveys enabled us to improve the specified categories used on the questionnaire for the large survey of 1974-75. In 1974-75, 770 (80 percent) of the 962 written-in plans involved hopes or activities designed to find a job. In 1973-74 there were only 56 out of 274 replies (20 percent) of this type.

Open ended plans by sex

In the 1974-75 sample as a whole it was the females who were slightly over-represented among those job-seeking (49.7 percent of the category *v.* 48.1 of the sub-sample). Note that females are more prone to write in responses than males. They form 48.1 percent of this sub-sample, but only 43.9 of that which tabulated first plans by using our specified categories.

Of those who wrote in plans the males are over-represented among those planning to move, travel, enter the armed forces, enter a variety of other educational programs (not specified in our categories) or begin an apprenticeship. Only females plan to make marriage an end in itself, or consider marriage plans to be of sufficient interest to report them in detail. In 1973-74 males were also over-represented among those planning to travel and enter the armed forces, but it was the females who were more prone to enter educational programs (other than those we had specified).

Open-ended plans by year of program

In 1974-75 there were 927 written-in plans given by dropouts for whom we know school grade. The grade 9s were much over-represented among those who wrote on the questionnaire that they *hoped* to find a job (86 percent of the grade 9s in this sub-sample gave this response *v.* 79.8 for the sub-sample generally). This helps explain why the grade 9s were generally under-represented in the specified job-related plan categories of the first and second plan responses. The wording is perhaps indicative of their difficulty in finding any sort of job. The written-in job wordings were all variations on 'hoping' rather than 'planning'. Grade 10 students were also over- represented in this category; those from 11 and 12 appear more or less as expected; grade 13 dropouts are greatly under-represented. All written-in categories, other than those discussing jobs, involve small numbers (see table 48).

In the 1973-74 survey there were 272 written-in plans given by students for whom we know the school grade. The largest number (33.1 percent) used some phrase indicating that they were "undecided", "not sure", "hadn't really made up [their] mind yet". Apart from that group, the largest category was the one which became so large the following year, "hope to find a job", but it involved only 21 percent of the sub-sample, not almost 80 percent as in 1974-75 (see table 49).

Open-ended plans by achievement level

In 1974-75 there were 714 students who wrote in plans on the questionnaires for whom the schools reported an average mark. For all achievement levels the main response was the job seeking one, but those who had a C average or higher are under-represented in this category. So, while at least three-quarters of all students, whatever their achievement level, who wrote in plans report that they intend to look for jobs, as we approach the lower end of the marks spectrum the percentage with job seeking plans becomes greater — 82.4 percent of the Ds are in this category, 80.2 of the Fs, only 76.9 of the As and 75.0 of the Bs. A disproportionate number of the Bs and Cs plan to travel, and of the Cs and Fs to enter the armed forces (see table 50).

In the 1973-74 survey no A students wrote in a plan. That year the Fs were not over-represented among those planning to seek jobs (in fact they were slightly under-represented) but the Ds were considerably over-represented (they formed 33.8 percent of the sub-sample but 38.7 of the job-seeking category). Again we find a disproportionate number of Fs among those planning to enter the armed forces and, this time, Ds among those planning to travel.

In summary: The picture gained from the students' second plans (i.e., their second choice of a specified plan) and open-ended plans (i.e., ones written in on the questionnaires) is not greatly different from that which we expected. The second specified plans tend to complement the first and for this reason the second set are somewhat more heavily in study categories since the first were strongly in work categories. There is a decided difference between the plans of the males and females. When we cross classify choices by achievement level there is strong evidence of unrealistic planning. Academically weak students seem to be indulging in daydreams rather than serious plans. Females are more prone than males to write in describing detailed plans. For both males and females, if a plan was written in, it was highly likely to refer in some way to seeking a job. Certain write-in plans are predictable. They were not provided for in the specified categories, but each year there were a few students intending to enter the armed forces or to travel. Each year a large number of specific educational plans were reported apart from the specified categories "night school", "trade school" and "community college". These students preferred to describe a program rather than tie themselves to entering a specific type of institution. Their plans are likely to be still very nebulous and, often, they do not know what type of institution offers such programs (or they involve such esoteric plans as taking pilot training by means of private lessons; each year we had a few of these).

INTERVIEW DATA ON DROPOUTS' PLANS

Each interview included questions about the dropouts' plans. They differed according to whether the person was not studying or not. The interview for those working or unemployed was longer. We shall first report the responses of the dropouts who had returned to study and then deal with the other two groups.

The question was asked:

Have you made any plans beyond completion of your present study?

The interviewer was given five categories into which to fit the student's response: "further education", "get a job right away", "get married", "take time off for travel" and "other". Thirty-five of those who had returned to school answered the question, and 21 of those who had entered other educational institutions. The percentage distribution of their responses was as follows:

Student's response	Returned to school %	Studying elsewhere %	Row total No.	Row total %
Further education	65.7	42.8	32	57.1
Get a job	25.7	47.6	19	33.9
Get married	2.9	4.8	2	3.6
Other	5.7	4.8	3	5.4
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0
N =	35	21	56	

None of the interviewed students intended to take time off to travel. As we expected, those dropouts who have returned to study plan to enter additional educational programs. This was particularly so of the ones who had re-entered secondary school. More than half those presently in some other educational institution view the completion of that program as the end of their studying — at least for the foreseeable future. Only 43 percent have further educational plans compared with 66 percent of the school re-entrants. The working and unemployed-dropouts were asked:

Generally speaking, how satisfied are you with what you are doing now?

A five point scale was provided, ranging from "very satisfied" to "very dissatisfied". Two hundred and three of the working and 101 of the unemployed-dropouts answered the question. The percentage distribution of their responses was as follows:

Students' response	Working-Dropouts			Unemployed Dropouts			Row total	
	Male %	Female %	Total No.	Male %	Female %	Total No.	No.	%
Very satisfied	21.7	29.6	51	6.9	2.3	5	56	18.4
Satisfied	48.7	38.6	90*	34.5	32.7	34	124	40.8
Uncertain	7.8	4.5	13	12.1	4.6	9	22	7.2
Dissatisfied	13.1	14.8	28	34.5	39.5	37	65	21.4
Very dissatisfied	8.7	12.5	21	12.1	20.9	16	37	12.2
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0			100.0
N =	115	88	203	58	43	101	304	

*Includes 1 for whom sex is not know, which has been coded as male.

Overall, almost 60 percent of these dropouts were fairly well satisfied with their current state, the proportion was higher among those working than those unemployed (the two "satisfied" categories combined, 69.4 percent *v.* 38.7). What is rather surprising is that so many of the unemployed are generally satisfied. The majority express various degrees of dissatisfaction, it is true, but the combined total dissatisfaction is only 52.4 percent. Their second question was:

Do you have any regrets about leaving school when you did?

The majority answered "no" (69.7 percent of the employed who answered the question*, 85 males and 54 females; 59.0 percent of the unemployed**, 37 males and 22 females). If they expressed any regrets the students were asked to explain or describe the basis. Thirty-one gave explanations (15 of the employed, 16 of the unemployed). They were coded into two types: academic (i.e., having to do with thwarted study plans) and "other". Twelve of the employed (three males, nine females) had academic-related regrets, three had others. Three of the unemployed had academic-related regrets (two males, one female) and an equal number had other types. Then these dropouts were asked:

Do you have any plans to return to secondary school sometime in the future?

The majority do not intend to return to school. There were 186 working and 96 unemployed-dropouts who answered the question. Their percentage distribution was as follows:

Student's response	Working-dropouts			Unemployed-dropouts			Row total	
	Male %	Femal e %	Total No.	Male %	Female %	Total No.	No.	%
Yes	25.3	25.3	47	33.9	47.5	38	85	30.1
No	74.7	74.7	139*	66.1	52.5	58	197	69.9
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0			100.0
N	99	87	186	56	40	96	282	

*Includes 1 of unknown sex who was coded as male

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*There were 6 who did not reply.
**There were 3 who did not reply.

The coincidence is that among working-dropouts males and females divide on this question in the same proportions, about three to one against returning to school. The strongest support for "returning to school sometime" was among the unemployed girls, almost half. These dropouts were then asked:

How important do you think it is, for your career plans, to get a secondary school graduation diploma?

For the replies the interviewers were provided with a 5-point scale ranging from "very important" to "not important at all". The employed were pretty evenly divided as to important/unimportant; the largest category of the unemployed thought it very or fairly important to graduate from secondary school. The percentage distribution of the replies was as follows:

Student's response	Working-dropouts %	Unemployed-dropouts %	Total No.	Total %
Very important	24.6	25	74	24.7
Fairly important	18.1	18	54	18.1
Uncertain	14.1	21	49	16.4
Fairly unimportant	24.1	24	72	24.1
Not important at all	19.1	12	50	16.7
Total	100.0	100		100.0
N =	199	100	299	

In both categories girls were over-represented among those who felt it was very or fairly important for their careers that they graduate from high school. And yet earlier in the interview most of these students had declared that they had no intention of returning to school. They were then asked:

Would you like to be able to finish high school if you could do it on a part-time basis (say on weekends, at summer school, by correspondence, at night school)?

One hundred and ninety-two of the working-dropouts and 92 of the unemployed answered the question. The majority said "yes". The percentage distribution was as follows:

Student's response	Working-dropouts %	Unemployed-dropouts %	Total No.	Total %
Yes	58.3	56.5	164	57.7
No	41.7	43.5	120	42.3
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0
N =	192	92	284	

The girls were over-represented among the unemployed who would like to study part-time (e.g., they represented 51.9 percent of the unemployed who answered "yes", although they were only 41.7 of the sub-sample); the boys were over-represented among the employed group who answered "yes" (males were 56.5 percent of that sub-sample but 59.8 of the affirmative category). However, the picture changed somewhat when asked:

Are you participating in any part-time study now?

The majority were not. There were 198 working-dropouts and 99 unemployed who answered the question. Girls were more commonly studying, but even they were few — the largest group (17 percent) was of female working-dropouts. That is, there were 21 working-dropouts currently studying part-time (15 females) and six unemployed (five females). Those who were studying part-time were asked if they paid fees: eleven employed dropouts and one unemployed were paying fees. Those who were not currently studying part-time were asked:

Do you have any future plans for part-time study?

One hundred and fifty-six of the working-dropouts replied. The majority had no plans to study part-time; 89 answered "no" (57.1 percent), 67 "yes" (42.9 percent). The replies of the unemployed were much the same; 55 "no" (64.7), 30 "yes" (35.3), and 18 did not reply.

The students were then asked:

Have you made any other plans beyond what you are presently doing?

There were given six types of response, three of which were open-ended so that there was opportunity to describe the plans pretty fully. Almost all those who were interviewed had plans. Their percentage distribution by type of plan is shown below:

Student's response	Working-dropouts %	Unemployed-dropouts %	Total No.	Total %	1974/75 questionnaire %
Stay at present job	59.5	0.0	116	40.0	23.9
Find a better job	14.4	61.0	86	29.7	16.0
Get married	3.1	6.3	12	4.1	N.S.
Return to high school full-time	8.2	11.6	27	9.3	22.3
Other education plans	11.8	15.8	38	13.1	11.6
Travel	2.0	2.1	6	2.1	N.S.
Other	1.0	3.2	5	1.7	26.2*
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0
No	195	95	290		7404

N.S. = not specified on the questionnaire.
*Includes the specified "other", "care for my home", "no specific plans".

The percentages on the right above show the distribution of the plans reported on the 1974-75 questionnaires. There the proportion of dropouts saying they intended to return to school was much higher. This table does not include those dropouts who were interviewed and were found to have returned to school. There were 44; they represent 10.3 percent of the 427 who were interviewed. If that proportion is typical then we can assume that 10.3 percent of the 7494 students who reported re-entry plans on their questionnaires will return to school — i.e., 772. In other words, 1667 said they *planned* to return to school but probably only some 772 (46.3 percent) will actually do so.

Secondary schooling is free. The fees paid for other educational programs in Ontario do not cover their real cost. That part of the population which stays within the formal educational system in its youth (to post-secondary, university and professional or graduate training) receives a large public subsidy which has direct and lasting monetary benefits to the individual. There has been much talk of the desirability of "continuing education". So we asked these students, who had opted out of the free or highly subsidized educational service, and who, if they continued their education, would likely do so on a part-time basis:

Do you think that part-time education should be free, as is some full-time education (i.e., high school)?

The majority thought it should be free. But there was a sizeable minority who answered "no" (i.e., against their personal interests). There were 178 working-dropouts and 83 unemployed who answered the question; 102 (57.3 percent) of the former and 55 (66.3 percent) of the latter thought part-time study should be free. They were also asked:

Who do you think should pay for your education?

Four possible sources of funding were specified as well as a write-in "other" category; 95 working-dropouts replied and 55 unemployed. The percentage distribution of the replies was as follows:

Student's response	Working-dropouts	Unemployed-dropouts	Total	
	%	%	No.	%
School board	14.7	10.9	20	13.3
Provincial government	74.8	69.1	109	72.7
Municipality	2.1	1.8	3	2.0
Employer	4.2	1.8	5	3.3
Other	4.2	16.4	13	8.7
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0
N =	95	55	150	

Those students who do not regard the funding as a private (personal or family) responsibility look primarily to the provincial government to foot the bill.

In summary: When youngsters are asked about their future plans there is a fairly high level of wishful thinking and unreality about their replies. In this case, by the structuring of the question, both in the questionnaire and the interviews, their attention was directed primarily to career plans and study plans. Since the prime reason for leaving school had been to take (or seek) a job, and "working" was the first current activity of most of the dropouts, we expected most plans would be related to the current job or ambitions for a better job. Nevertheless a sizeable minority, about one third, reported and discussed study plans. This proportion remained fairly steady no matter what sub-sample of the questionnaire was being analysed. When we interviewed the dropouts we found that about 10 percent had already returned to school. Although some of the others planned to return to full-time study, the proportion was much smaller than the questionnaire replies would suggest. More of the unemployed than the working-dropouts had study plans, but clearly much of this planning must be discounted. If the dropouts obtain satisfactory employment they are unlikely to put into effect their study plans. Between 35 percent and 43 percent of those who were interviewed plan to study part-time. But the replies to other questions in the interviews show that these plans also contain a high level of wishful thinking. Only 27 dropouts were actually studying part-time when they were contacted for interview. That number represents 7.05 percent of the interviewed students, apart from the 44 who had returned to school (i.e., 7.05 percent of 383). If we assume that 7.05 percent of the listed dropouts might be expected to undertake part-time study sometime in the future, the figure would be 1412 for the 1974-75 losses (i.e., 7.05 percent of 20,027).

7

Re-entries

We were asked to establish the number and the reasons for leaving school of the dropouts who were returning to school. We have already reported some statistics relating to re-entries in the data on "activities" culled from the interviews. But "activity" is not really an accurate heading under which to discuss those returning to school; status would be more appropriate. Re-entries can be in all stages: (1) They might be questioned after they have actually returned, in which case they are actually registered as re-entries; (2) They might be questioned just before they return, in which case their plans are pretty definite; they may even have taken steps to translate plan into actuality; (3) They might be questioned while they are out of school (having left, re-entered, and left again) with no definite plans for return. In the data of our small re-entry substudy we shall try to make the stage of the re-entrant clear.

We studied intensively the 1974-75 re-entrants of one of our large cooperating boards by means of checking, for every one of its secondary schools, all movement of pupils in and out each month. What applies to this board may not be true of every board in our sample, but the evidence suggests that this is a fairly accurate picture, although the phenomenon of re-entry is more common in large urban centres than elsewhere in Ontario. There were 1511 students classified by the board as re-entrants in 1974-75. We had questionnaire responses from 259 (17.1 percent); 71 proved not to be *re-entrants* as we are using the term. They had never really left the school system. There are a variety of explanations for their classification. The most common was some kind of transfer or registration peculiarity, where the student had intended to take a summer school course, changed his mind and did not show up for the course, was deemed to have left school and then re-entered in September. If we assume that the percentage of such persons is the same on the total list as among the respondents we would reduce the re-entry total to 1097. This figure is probably somewhat low. There is a greater likelihood of a student writing to us to correct an alleged wrong status than simply complying with a request for information. So that, although 27.4 percent of the respondents wrote or phoned to explain that they were not actually re-entrants, it is unlikely that 27.4 percent of the total list were in the same position. Nevertheless, since there are no data by which the figure might be corrected, we prefer to understate the total number rather than exaggerate the condition. We found that 18 of the alleged re-entrants were dropouts. They had left school. They had not returned. They may be students who had visited their old school saying that they intended to return, but if so their plans aborted. When they are deleted from the list, we are left with a net figure of 1079, 3.1 percent of the system's September enrollment.

One hundred and seventeen of the respondents had re-entered and were attending school when they replied to the questionnaire (10.8 percent of the listed re-entrants, 45.2 percent of the respondents in the sub-study). Some did not answer all questions on the questionnaire, so the totals for different questions vary. Seventy-one of the respondents were out of school again when they replied to our questions (6.6 percent of the net re-entry figure, 27.4 of the respondents of the sub-study).

Because of the small numbers involved we shall treat all re-entrants together, and address ourselves primarily to the main questions asked of the task force: What is the likelihood that re-entrants will stay in school and finish their programs? What is the likelihood that they will leave again? Re-entrants are to be found in all schools, including special alternative programs which were set up for dropouts or students dissatisfied with (or not suited by) the regular secondary school programs. The numbers vary greatly from school to school — from 1 to 352. The largest re-entry month was September, 77.2 percent of the total. If we discount the list as discussed above, reducing the total from 1151 to 1079, this proportion would not change unless we had evidence that the errors were differentially distributed by month. It is our impression that the 'errors' concentrate heavily in September. If we reduce the September figure by the entire number where we know a classification peculiarity occurred, we should deduct 432 from the September re-entrant figure. This would reduce that month's percentage to 63.8 rather than 77.2 percent of the year's total.

Re-entrants are to be found in all years of the school. To look at their relative importance we shall compare them with the September 1975 enrollment by grade. Grade 9, in absolute terms has a much larger enrollment than any other grade, so one would expect an absolutely larger number of re-entrants to be in that grade. Re-entrants come from a pool of students who have previously dropped out. So, if the absolute size of one grade level pool is larger than that of another, we would expect to find more re-entrants to that grade. It is apparent that the probability of re-entring varies according to the grade the student had dropped out of. Year-1 re-entrants in 1974-75 formed only 17.1 percent of the total (much too small a proportion). The percentage distribution of the re-entrants by year was as follows: year-1, 17.1 percent; year-2, 23.0; year-3, 25.5; year-4, 18.4; year-5, 14.8. The re-entrants, unlike the dropouts, did not leave school primarily to get jobs. The largest group left because they were failing (18.1 percent), the next because of personal reasons other than financial, (13.3), then because they needed money and had the chance of a job (11.2), to accept a job offer (9.6) and just the same number because they were dissatisfied with teachers or the teaching, and slightly fewer (9.0 percent) left because they just hated school and couldn't hack it any longer.

Re-entrants are like other dropouts in that, overwhelmingly, they had been making up their minds to take the decision to leave over a long period of time. Half who answered the question gave this reply. Those who said that some recent change influenced their decision to leave represent 16.8 percent; the ones who said that a recent change had not caused the decision, but that they did take it hastily, formed 33.1 percent. Re-entrants differ from the dropout sample in that, for the most part, their mothers do not approve the decision to leave school (68 percent report mothers' disapproval, 22.9 approval, and 9.1 percent indifference). The same picture of fathers' disapproval was reported: 68.5 percent said their fathers disapproved; 16.4 that they approved and 15.1 that they were indifferent. These findings suggest that a large factor in the re-entrant's decision to return to school is parental pressure. The thesis that re-entry depends upon a combination of parental attitude and failure to find a satisfying principal activity (usually work) accords with the findings of this study. It can also be tested by looking at the replies to the fourth question asked of re-entrants, "What are you doing now?" There were 184 responses. The largest number were working full-time (29.9 percent), followed by working part-time

(19.6). That is well below the dropout respondents' sample who listed working as the prime activity (48.7 percent working full-time, plus another 12.8 part-time). For this group of re-entrants, 17.4 percent were unemployed and looking for work; below the 24.2 percent of the 1974-75 dropout respondent's sample.

Since these are re-entrants and most had actually gone back to school (although some had dropped out again and some were still out, making up their minds whether or not to go back), it was no surprise to find that the largest "plans" group was "return to same secondary school" (38.0 percent). Other large responses were: "to stay at present job" (11.9 percent), "to get a better/different job" (13.0), "to return to a different secondary school" (9.23), "to go to a CAAT" (6.52). There were 15 (8.1 percent) who had no plans.

After this brief statistical description of the re-entrant, let us turn to the other question which is of interest: the timing of this movement in and out of school. There were two re-entrants in our sample who had left the system before 1971, four had left in 1971, eleven in 1972, 45 in 1973, 76 in 1974 and 26 during 1975. In other words, of the 164 who were re-entrants in 1974-75, and gave us the dates they had left school, only 102 had left in 1974 or 1975. Some of the 76 who had left in 1974 left during the academic year 1973-74, some during that of 1974-75 (i.e., they were dropouts and re-entrants the same year). This gives us some indication of how long the dropout might take to decide to 'come back'. So, in measuring a school's success in inducing its students to complete their schooling (or its failure to provide appropriate service as perceived by the dropout), we must be careful not to measure too soon. At least 38 percent of the re-entrant respondents of 1974-75 had dropped out of school in previous school years.

Of the 164 who provided us with dates on their movements in and out, 146 had moved back into school at least once before — three between March and May 1972; four in September 1972; seven in September 1973, eight between January and May 1974; 76 in September 1974 and another eleven in other Fall months of 1974, twelve in January 1975 and another three between February and May; 21 in September 1975 and one in October 1975. For 41 of the respondents this was their second dropout experience; they represent 15.8 percent of our respondents, 3.8 percent of the net re-entrants figure. The timing of the second dropout decision was as follows: one left again in January 1973, two in January 1974 and nine between February and June, six left again in September 1974, nine between October and December, two in January 1975 and eight between February and June; one left again in September 1975, two in November and one in December.

Of the 41 who had dropped out twice, 15 had returned twice previously, one in February 1973; six in September 1974 and three in other Fall months of 1974, one in January 1975 and one in June; and three returned in September 1975. And there were four re-entrants who had dropped out three times. Although registered as third time re-entrants, they were among those out again when contacted in late fall 1975. Two had left school for their third time in January of that year, one in May, and one as recently as December 1975. We closed the returns at the end of December 1975. This dropping out/re-entering is a never-ending process. Whatever date the 'books' are closed there will be some dropouts and re-entrants about to come back to school or about to leave.

From this detailed study of every movement of every school of one big system in one academic year we find: (1) the ratio of re-entrants listed to dropouts listed in the same year was 1:4.4; (2) not all the re-entrants were from that year's dropout crop. But if we assume that the dropouts of any year will show the same disposition to trickle back into the system as the ones of previous years, we can estimate that 20-25 percent of the dropouts will return within five years. The longer the period out the fewer (proportionately) will return. In other words the largest number 're-gained' will be acquired in the year following the first dropout step, e.g., 51 of the respondents had left during the 1974-75 academic year and returned in fall 1975; they represent 31.1 percent of those who gave us a complete set of entry and exit dates. Over six percent of the net re-entries of 1974-75 were out of school again by the time they were contacted. Twenty-five percent of those who gave us entry and exit dates had dropped out at least twice, 9.2 percent had dropped out twice and returned twice, 4.6 percent had dropped out three times. None (as of December 1975) had returned three times.

From the statistical description it is evident that re-entrants are males rather than females. They are more likely to have been dropouts from higher than lower grades of secondary school. Their parents do not approve this dropping out (and this is probably an important factor in their return to school). To a greater extent than other dropouts they have failed to settle down in a job, which is probably another reason why they are willing to try school again — in spite of the fact that they left in the first place primarily because of school-oriented reasons (failing, criticism of teachers, and hating school).

There were two other questions which re-entrants were asked. The first was: "How did your parents feel when you returned to school?" There were 174 replies; 105 reported that their parents were very happy, 26 that they were neutral; twelve that they were unhappy. In the other cases the student either "did not know" or gave some other explanation. These replies accord with the reports of strong parental disapproval of the re-entrant's dropout decision(s). The second was: "Have you completed, or are you planning to complete, your program of study?" Overwhelmingly they answered, "yes", 127 out of the 177 who replied; 17 had already completed their programs; 24 said, "no" (presumably they were among re-entrants who had moved out of school again and had not returned); nine gave some other response.

In summary: Re-entrants are a small group, about three percent of the enrollment. Some of them straggle in and out of secondary school several times, taking as long as five years of movement in-and-out of school either to complete their programs or to leave for good. It is probably parental pressure which drives them back to school each time but their prognosis for completion is not high. On the other hand they do not seem to settle well into the work world either.

8

Conclusion

The 1974-75 study on dropouts provided most of the evidence reported in this book but it was not the first dropout study OISE had undertaken. It was commissioned by the Ontario Ministry of Education for its Task Force on Dropouts. But the Task Force itself had been formed, to some extent, *because* two small earlier dropout studies of OISE had convinced the authorities that there was a dropout problem, that it was widespread and little documented or understood. Why had we become interested in dropouts in the first place? Our interest had been triggered in a quite different manner from that which usually motivates dropout studies. We did not ignore the many traditional classic dropout studies but they did not greatly influence our research design. And what we found to a large extent negates or upsets the classic findings. In this chapter we shall explain the circumstances of these three statements.

Why we study dropouts

Our academic interest is in forecasting methods. Our research is primarily applied and our teaching is primarily practical, i.e., we are involved in the training of planners who will work in a research and planning capacity for local boards of education, ministries or educational institutions. One of our recurring responsibilities is a Ministry of Education projections contract which we direct. Each year we prepare long and short-range elementary and secondary enrollment projections for the province and for 110 local boards of education. As the basis for this work, about March of each year we receive from the Ministry a computer printout showing the audited enrollment (as of September 30th) of every school in the province by grade and by the age of the pupils. We at OISE, therefore, are one of the few groups in the province paid to study a statistical picture of the educational system and the movement occurring within it. If we can correctly understand past movement, we are more likely to be able to predict future movement accurately. In Spring 1972 we had observed a change in the flow of students in the upper secondary school grades. But that year there had been a change in the statistical reporting system; so this might have caused the change—i.e., the change in the rates of movement from grade to grade might be more apparent than real. In any case the change had been slight and might be temporary. Therefore, we did not greatly change our enrollment estimates. By Spring 1973 it was clear that we had made a mistake. The overall estimates were satisfactory but the errors in certain grades were too high. Particularly the Grade 11-12 transition (i.e., the proportionate relationship of the number of pupils in grade 12 to the number the year before in grade 11) was much lower than anticipated.

We checked with a number of secondary school principals and they confirmed that their schools were experiencing an unusual loss flow—both within the year (between September and June) and between years (i.e., "no shows" who had not turned up in September although they were expected). From our brief phone calls we established that this loss seemed to be greatly affecting the upper grades, particularly Grade 12; that it involved students whose work was satisfactory; and that many areas of the province were involved. On March 30, 1973 OISE held a one day projection users' conference which was attended by 61 administrators from 51 local systems of education and officials of the Ministry. At the conference our opinion was confirmed—there was a change occurring which was ill documented and little understood. Meanwhile we had to make judgements about the movement in the grade rates in order to start preparation of the year's projections (which are sent to Boards at the beginning of August).

So, with the cooperation of thirteen county boards of education, between April and June we did a quick study. It was a low cost survey of all the dropouts from the upper three grades of all their schools, with the Boards and OISE donating the labour, the boards paying the cost of postage and OISE the printing and computer cost. The total direct dollar expenditure was less than $1000. But the survey did show that the principals' hunches were likely to be correct. Our "projection line" had to be adjusted; but by how much? How much variance should we allow for from board to board, grade to grade, age to age of pupils? Were all programs equally affected? These were not a set of idle questions raised by a group of ivory-tower professors. We had to make decisions and the error of these decisions would be apparent on September 30th.

Apart from this short-term consideration, there were long-term ones of equal importance. Our projections are, by year, for ten years forward. A slight error in the first year of projection becomes magnified as time goes on. No one expects to be able to forecast the condition ten years hence with high accuracy,* but we do set outselves tolerances for reasonable accuracy one year forward and provide revised estimates every year. In our long-term projections for a number of years we have been observing the approach of the peak in the secondary school enrollment. If this new dropout development caused the upper grades to be smaller than anticipated, the peak would occur sooner than predicted and the decline would be sharper. Such a development would have serious consequences for the system. It would create even greater imbalances between teacher demand and supply than we anticipated (unless the supply of new teachers were adjusted) and it would create greater imbalances between the distribution of pupil places (physical facilities) and the need for pupil places—since no change occurs to the same degree in all places throughout the province.

This first study gave rise to a small informal report, a departmental occasional paper called *The Dropout*, which appeared in Fall 1973. By the end of 1973 the Ministry had decided to name a Task Force to study the problem but the work of investigation committees gathers momentum slowly. They have traditional modes of operating; their members must become familiar with the background of the issue; they must be made aware of the findings of other studies; they must hold hearings and receive briefs. Therefore, it was decided that a second small study would be carried out, funded by OISE and the cooperating boards, and the main effort delayed until 1974-75. The format of the study did not greatly change and our second experience merely reinforced our decision to keep the original cooperative research design. Some variations in administration were tried out and in the second sample of eight boards we kept six of the original boards and added two large urban systems which surveyed all their losses, not just those from the upper three grades. Again, the boards and OISE donated the labour, the boards paid the postage costs, and OISE the printing and computer costs. The direct expenditure was less than $1000.

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*For the local board projections we consider an error (one year forward) of less than 1% in the overall enrollment good and between 1.0% and 1.5% satisfactory for systems which have more than 1000 pupils and an absolute error of less than 50, good for small systems.

In September 1974 we started the large survey for the Ministry Task Force. This time contract funds enabled OISE to employ research staff full time on the project and to cover all direct and indirect costs, except the labour and postage costs involved in preparing the dropout lists and mailing the questionnaires. All the twenty-six cooperating boards, except one, bore these costs. OISE undertook the preparation of its lists and the administration of its questionnaires. For the big study, interviewing was added to the research design—telephone interviews arranged and supervised by OISE with interviewers paid from the contract budget.

It is important to underline the different origin, purpose and nature of this research on dropouts. Most dropout studies seem to start with the question: "Why is the school failing?" And they are primarily concerned with trying to prescribe remedial action which will keep the youth in school. Depending upon whether their authors are psychologists, sociologists or school personnel, they stress (a) the motivation, self esteem, happiness, desires or needs of the student and the behaviour of teachers; or (b) the social characteristics of students or teachers; or the 'administrative climate' likely to avert dropping out or (c) programs, and administrative arrangements which will provide the ex-students with alternative forms of educational service. The studies vary from the trivial to the serious, from very poor to very carefully designed. But after reviewing a large assortment of them we decided that they were quite useless for our purpose. We took the position that dropping out of secondary school was neither a good nor a bad thing. We merely wanted to know if this group involved more students than it had formerly; if it did, how greatly was it likely to increase and at what levels, and in which year (overall) would the trend cease. We wanted to know how much dropping out was occurring and where. We needed to know why the students left to see if they were responding primarily to a condition over which school personnel have some control or whether the "driving" factor was an exogeneous one (outside of the system). We needed to know who influenced the student decision, so that *if* school authorities wished to counteract the influence, they could (a) assess their chances of success and (b) know to whom their efforts should be directed. We needed to know what the student was doing, in order to judge the stability of the dropout decision (and also, incidentally, to see if this "school" problem was also creating or exacerbating some non-school problem, and we found it is: the dropout problem might equally be called the youth employment problem). Finally we needed to know about the dropouts' plans, primarily their study and work plans. The former, in particular, might help us estimate the re-entry flow.

It was no part of our task to provide "recipes" for solving the dropout problem, and we have not done this. But we did, as we intended, calibrate the condition so that we can begin to study the following questions: When does dropping out become a problem? Is a 6% loss to a system a nuisance and a 7% loss an irritant, but a 10% loss a catastrophe? Before such questions could even be considered we would have to look at related ones: Is the expected loss the same by sex? Does it affect all grade levels equally? Does it affect all programs equally? Does it affect all schools of the system? Can we identify the sub-populations in the dropout loss flow? Which ones do the schools wish to influence? Which ones can they reasonably expect to influence? How many dropouts will return to school? Which sub-populations are most likely to return? What would help increase the number? How long will the dropouts stay out? To answer questions such as these we must begin with accurate statistics. Our study was carefully designed to produce 'clean' data. In fact the statistical file which it generated is, from our point of view, its main 'product' because this will enable us to simulate various changes in the variables and study the effects this has upon the dropout rates. Because of this need for statistical precision we found that many dropout studies in the literature were of no use. They involved only special sub-populations of dropouts or only certain crisis schools or regions. They grossly over-estimated rates because they did not correct for re-entries. Since they assumed that it was the school authorities' responsibility to solve the "problem", their usual conclusion was to suggest program and personnel changes even though the classical studies showed over and over again that in-school variables played only a very limited role in affecting dropout rates.

Review of the literature

The list of titles of research articles and books on secondary school dropouts (such as a printout from the ERIC* file) is so large that it cannot be discussed here. We shall merely refer to a few to show the type of research undertaken, and we have listed a number in the Appendix. Most of these are graduate student theses or the publications of scholars. Each year there are many more informal mimeographed reports produced by the personnel of boards or departments of education for their own use. The formal literature includes few Ontario or Canadian studies. Most of the formal studies are American. Most have basic characteristics which make their findings irrelevant for our purpose. Most are pre-occupied with the differences among white/non-white students. In Ontario no minority group is so large and so homogeneous that the differences between it and the main school population dictate the form of analysis.

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*Educational Resources Information Center

In the mid 60s in the U.S. there appeared a flurry of dropout studies, the product of their concern with big city school systems, big city social problems and the war on poverty. That by Bert Greene, entitled *Preventing Dropouts*, begins by pointing out that the dropout problem is endemic to schooling and demonstrates the U.S. preoccupation with it by a brief review of major studies from the time of Thorndike's analysis of the enrollment data of twenty-three cities in 1900. He found that most of the school leaving occurred during the fifth, sixth and seventh grades of elementary school. Greene, by citing a set of studies, shows how the dropping out phenomenon was 'pushed up' into the secondary school during the 1930s and 40s. He then cites the study of Harold J. Dillon for the National Child Labor Committee in 1949. Dillon found that among dropouts:

— There was a fairly consistent regression in scholarship from the elementary school to the junior and senior high school.

— There was a high frequency of grade or subject failure in the junior and senior high schools.

— There was a marked regression in attendance from the elementary school to the junior and senior high schools.

— There were frequent transfers from one school to another for the dropouts.

— There was evidence of a feeling of insecurity, of "lack of belonging".

— There was a marked lack of interest in school work.
— More boys than girls dropped out.
— The largest group of students dropped out of tenth grade and the next largest left ninth grade.
— The primary reason for leaving school prior to graduation was one specifically related to school.

Greene's book ends by reminding us that "the problem of the dropout is a social, legal, economic and political problem as well as an educational one". He then lists a series of U.S. federal grovernment acts and agencies which are designed to help solve it (the War on Poverty, Community Action Programs and Job Corps, which arose from the Economic Opportunity Act; the training provided under the Manpower Act; the Vocational Education Act, the National Defense Education Act; and the various programs under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act—the title which provides funds to improve the education of children of low income families). It is evident that Greene regards dropping out as *primarily* a school failure which the school authorities must combat by adjusting the curriculum, teacher behaviour and counselling. In 1964 there appeared a publication called *Guidance and the School Dropout*, edited by Daniel Schreiber, the director of the project on school dropouts which was funded by the Ford Foundation. The book reprints the papers of a symposium held in 1963, jointly sponsored by the National Education Association and the American Personnel and Guidance Association. In the foreword, Schreiber points out, "Almost without exception school dropout reports and surveys reaching us from states and communities single out guidance and counseling as the *prime* consideration. The consensus is that a lack of guidance and counseling has contributed to the severity of the problem and that more and better services of this kind will improve school holding power. It is doubtful whether the school counselor can be the multipurpose cure for the inadequacies besetting our schools. But it is undeniable that he can be more effective in helping youth succeed in school and remain to graduate". In his introduction to the papers, Schreiber asks, "Who is the Dropout?" and he answers his question by citing a number of recent (mid 1960s) studies. The dropout is
— a male (53%)
— sixteen years old (60%)
— who quit either grade 9 or grade 10, particularly the latter;
— who has already failed one or even two grades (9 out of 10 had

been retained in a grade once, 6 out of 10 had been retained in a grade twice or more);

— one-quarter had previously been suspended;

— one-fifth were classified as serious behaviour problems;

— 70% of their mothers and 80% of their fathers had not themselves finished high school.

— 25% of their mothers and 30% of their fathers had not even finished sixth grade;

— two-thirds of the parents held negative or indifferent attitudes toward the value of education; they felt that the lack of a high school education would not hinder their child's later success in life;

— only 10% of the dropouts came from the academic course; the great majority came from the so-called general course with a scattered few from vocational or commercial courses;

— when they left school 10% were reading below the level appropriate for third grade of elementary school, "they might as well have been illiterate", and 45% were reading at or below the grade 6 level; 50% of the dropouts were in the "below-average" IQ classification.

Screiber sums up: "These, then, from the point of view of the school are some of the major factors involved in the dropout problem: (a) reading retardation (b) grade retention (c) low intelligence (d) negative self-image, and (e) family attitudes".

In 1967 Daniel Schreiber edited another series of papers in a book entitled, *Profile of the School Dropout, a reader on America's major educational problem*. This time he had a very eminent group of contributors indeed, among them Bruno Bettelheim, Martin Deutsch and Paul Goodman. The picture of the dropout had not greatly changed, the school was still the culprit. The solution was to change "social institutions, specifically the schools, to better accommodate those children". "Let me sketch briefly for you", said Schreiber, "a profile of the average dropout. The dropout is a child just past his sixteenth birthday who has an average or slightly below average intelligence, and is more likely to be a boy than a girl. He is not achieving according to his potential; he is not reading at grade level; and academically he is in the lowest quarter of his class. He is slightly below average for his grade placement, having been held back once in elementary or junior high school grades. He has not been in trouble with the law although he does take up an inordinate amount of the school administrator's time because of discipline problems. He seldom participates in extracurricular activities, feels rejected by the school and his fellow classmates, and in turn rejects them as well as himself. He is insecure in his school status, hostile toward others, and is less respected by his teachers because of his academic inadequacies. His parents were school dropouts as were his older brothers and sisters. His friends are persons outside the school, usually elder dropouts. He says he is quitting school because of lack of interest but that he intends to get a high school diploma in some manner because without it he can't get a job''.

We found in our statistical surveys, which we summarize in the final portion of this chapter that, as a profile of the average secondary school dropout who left Ontario schools in recent years, this picture is incorrect on almost all dimensions.

Schreiber's set of essays starts with a group of authors who not only consider the dropout a failure of schools, but who also reject schools. ''The dropouts, by and large'', according to Friedenberg, ''don't like middle-class culture and they know quite well what we can do with it. Dropping out is one way of telling us, and it is about time we turned our attention to the things about school that are bugging them. The school is the arena in which these youngsters encounter middle-class life, this is where the dropouts fight the ten-year ideological war that ends in their defeat and rout''.

Professor Friedenberg is followed by Paul Goodman, the author of *Growing up Absurd*. He opens with the statement, ''The dropouts are importantly victims of poverty, cultural deprivation, race prejudice, family and emotional troubles, and neighbourhood uprooting.'' He, too, castigates the schools: ''Thus, education becomes equivalent to regimentation. The schools become a universal trap. Those not in the schools fall outside of society altogether''. He disagrees with Friedenberg, ''These schools are *not* geared to 'middle-class values', a misleading use of words which has become common. The schools less and less represent *any* human values, but simply adjustment to a mechanism''. For Goodman the U.S. school is an institution which places undue emphasis on literacy and is over restrictive. One of his recommendations, the so-called alternative school, has received wide publicity and has led to the creation of special 'schools' in almost all large systems in North America. ''Dispense with the school'', he advises, and hold classes [with a pupil/teacher ratio of 10 to 1] in the streets, cafeterias, movies, museums, parks and factories''. Unfortunately, like many educational innovations, the effects of his advice will not bear objective scrutiny. At a per pupil expense which far exceeds the regular, standard programs the alternative schools are touted as the answer to many of the ills of the secondary school. Whatever other problems they may succeed in alleviating, they are not much use in averting dropout. Not all systems in our sample have such 'schools'. But without exception, those which have them demonstrate (over the three years of our study) that these schools have the highest dropout rates of their systems—they far exceed the loss rates of the big technical or commercial schools in the centre of large cities, which because they have large absolute numbers (and hence are highly visible) have generally been considered to have the most serious dropout problems. One other solution suggested by Goodman was the abolition of compulsory attendance laws. In Ontario compulsory attendance covers the period until the child's sixteenth birthday. The dropout problem of the secondary schools does not, for the most part, involve youth whose attendance at school is required by law.

Our findings

Let us, therefore summarize what we have discovered (thus far) about Ontario's secondary school dropouts:

There is indeed a dropout problem if, philosophically, you take the position that all youth should stay in school until they graduate (which in Ontario would mean generally to the successful completion of the number of credits which are equivalent to the end of grade 12 or grade 13). One might hold such a position from a number of bases. It might be argued on 'equity' grounds — education is a public service paid for by the community, all youth should participate in the benefit of the service, it is unjust to tax the general community in order to confer the benefit of education on only part of the youth (particularly when there is so high a correlation between education and occupational status, and educational participation and social class). So the argument runs for compulsory attendance to the normal age of secondary school termination (18 usually). But in Ontario we have compulsory education only until age 16. So why are we disturbed when youth aged 16+ leave school?

The problem arises, on our opinion, from several sources: one is the feeling that when a part of our population decides not to take advantage of a "free" goods (a free public service in this case) there must be something the matter with the goods. And having spent, for several decades, the largest part of our public money on education, we are concerned lest it not be well spent. A second is sheer numbers. For two decades as we have expanded, reorganized and reformed our school system; we 'pushed up' participation rates. Secondary schooling became a mass experience. The policies and investment which this required were defended by a variety of arguments. Suddenly the participation rates started to drop. Were the arguments false? Having created a public system capable of handling some 600,000 students, it would be irresponsible not to be concerned about the effect on that system of the premature departure of some 48,000-50,000 students per year. A third is the effect on the labour force of this unanticipated number of youths prematurely needing jobs. There are several considerations. For many years economists have been pointing out the needs of highly industrialized societies for highly trained workers. Will so many youths with partial secondary schooling find jobs? And in the competition for well paid, interesting, meaningful jobs will they not be at severe disadvantage compared with the rest of their age cohort, most of whom will complete secondary school and many of whom will even complete university studies?

Even if philosophically you do not take the position that all youth should stay in secondary school until they graduate, the dropout causes a problem. The problem becomes one of deciding, if youth will not stay in school, what experiences they must have before they quit it. The experiences ought to be geared to some expectation of what the youth will do next, and they must be so arranged that the (unpredictable) decision to quit, which can be taken at any time after age 16, will not leave the dropout too deficient in knowledge and skills.

1. Whether we deplore the decision to drop out of secondary school or not, the studies thus far demonstrate that the problem is a complex and growing one. We estimate that the dropouts within the school year grew from 7.1 percent of the September 30th enrollment in 1972/73 to 7.9 in 1973/74 and 8.1 in 1974/75. To these must be added the between-year dropouts, the "no-shows". The no-shows of September 1975 represented an estimated 4.3 percent of the 1974/75 enrollment. If, therefore, we add 4-5 percent to the figures above we can see the magnitude of the wastage. The rate is not as alarming as many informal Ontario studies of recent years have suggested, but it is too large to ignore.

2. The overall dropout rate masks a great deal of variance. And in certain systems and schools the proportion of dropouts has reached serious levels. Sometimes it is misleading to deal in percentages. With a small base, the loss of a few students creates a large percentage difference. But, on the other hand, with a small system, school or program, the absolute loss might be sufficient to reduce the enterprize to an unproductive, non-viable size. The system loss rates for dropouts alone in 1974/75 varied from 4.0 to 14.3 percent (of their September 30th enrollment). The school loss rates vary even more, and within all systems (except those having only one secondary school) there are schools with loss rates many times the level of other schools in the jurisdiction. To cite merely the most extreme cases — system #043's lowest school had a lost rate of 2.7, its highest a rate of 20.8; #045 had a rate of 2.3 and one of 19.3; #061 one of 1.8 and another of 24.4; #062 one of 4.4 and another of 24.2; #071 one of 2.2 and another of 28.2; #074 one of 4.9 and another of 52.4; #081 one of 2.0 and another of 16.7 and #102 had one of 2.0 and another 26.2.
3. Male dropout rates are higher than female ones (this is one of the few classic dropout findings which held true). They ranged from 5.0 percent (of its September enrollment) in the lowest board to 15.1 percent in the highest. Female rates varied from 2.9 to 13.6.
4. The loss rates by grade varied greatly from board to board. Most commonly Grade 13 showed the highest loss rate (16 out of the 26 boards). In the others the highest loss rate was usually that of Grade 11. In no case did Grade 9 show the highest loss rate, which completely upsets the classical dropout finding. The Grade 9 rates ranged from 1.3 (of Board #072's September Grade 9 enrollment) to 9.5 (of Boards #031 and #074). The Grade 10 rates of loss varied from 3.0 (#063) to 12.6 (#074); the Grade 11 rates from 4.4 (#083) to 19.6 (#031); the Grade 12 from 4.5 (#051) to 12.7 (#085); the Grade 13 from 4.6 (#051) to 17.7 (#102).
5. The dropout flow is not evenly spread throughout the months of the year. Moreover, it varies by the sex of the student, year of school left and student's achievement level to such a degree that the different patterns are most unlikely to be the product of chance. The exit flow generally peaks very shortly after the

opening of school, with October or September being the highest loss month and the other the second highest in most systems. There is another lesser rise in January/February. Although the patterns by sex show somewhat the same general contour, the girls tend to leave rather more often at the beginning of terms (September and January), the boys at the end (December and May). The Grade 9 dropout tends to leave toward the end of the school year and the Grade 10 pattern is very similar. For the upper three grades, on the other hand, the heavy loss is at the beginning of the year and by February the exit flow is tapering off. The easiest way to note the detailed differences in the patterns of loss by achievement level is by referring to figure 7. Given the overall loss pattern, that of the Bs and Cs is predictable; it reduces fairly steadily from the September level each month through May. The interesting pattern variation is that of the Fs, which builds up steadily from September so that by May it is more than double the earlier figure (in absolute terms, in the 1974/75 survey, 410 *v*. 168; 41.8 percent of the May losses *v* 17.0 of those of September).

The variable loss by month is important because of the type of school grant system applied in Ontario. Grants from the province to the local board are paid in three installments throughout the year, based on the student enrollment. Therefore, since peak losses occur in September-October and January-February, boards receive grants for services provided for only one or two months of the grant term. This has serious consequences both from the point of view of the province and of the local educational authority. It has the effect of masking actual per capita costs, which are higher per-student-day than they appear to be. Since such decisions as teacher allocation within a board are made as of September, as the year progresses the equity of the allocation by school is upset (since the loss rates by school vary greatly). There is some adjustment and shifting of teachers in January, made necessary by the mid-term teacher resignations, but the flexibility for adjustment is not great. So the unequal pupil/teacher ratio at the level of the school rises throughout the year. Much more serious is that the board overall pupil/teacher ratio is masked. A ratio (which is not a classroom ratio but represents the proportion of teacher-professionals including those occupying certain specified responsibility, supervisory and administrative positions) is agreed in the negotiations of the previous Spring, based upon a predicted September enrollment. This ratio defines the teacher force of the board; and, from this overall figure and some knowledge of the customary number of resignations, boards make decisions about hiring teachers for the coming year. So there are two constraints operating to produce disequilibrium. Boards hire on an annual contract according to the September "need". The need, as we have seen from our surveys, reduces throughout the year because of dropout. The dropout, for the period he is out of the system (perhaps permanently), represents an absolute loss of grants. He is not comparable to the transfer, which in financial terms is merely a switch of grant from one authority to another.* So, if there is a considerable within-year dropout flow, boards have a commitment to a certain level of costs per term and the prospect of a seriously reduced cash flow by the second and third terms. What is exacerbating the situation is that, since 1972, all "movement" within the secondary school teacher force has been reducing; withdrawals have greatly dropped; the system is "freezing" (like many other labour markets). The freeze is partly a response to economic conditions and partly the anticipation of contraction (the type of contractim already experienced in the elementary sector and shortly to be seen in the secondary sector).

6. We answered the question, "who is leaving?", by statistics showing the dropout stream by sex, age, program, year of school left and achievement level. This information we obtained from the schools' records. And we found that on almost every dimension these dropouts do not match the classical description of the dropout. There are, within the total flow, sub groupings which can be identified, and one accords with the classical picture, but the general description must be revised.

   We found that predominantly the dropout stream is male (roughly 58:42 which has not changed the classical finding). About one third of the dropouts are 16 years old, about 6.2 percent are younger and the rest are older. The average age is

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*Of course if transfer is always in one direction—a constant out-transfer—it also represents a stream of financial loss to a board.

17 not 16. The average age of the male dropout is about 17 years two months and of the female about 16 years 9 months. A more useful statistic is the relationship, by age, of the dropout and the group he is leaving (i.e., a rate). Since few can legally leave before the age of 15 we compared the percentage distribution, by years of age 16 and over, of the dropout pool and the enrollment pool. The younger students are under-represented. The older the student, the greater the probability of being represented in the dropout pool. The figures are as follows: 16 years old, 35.8 percent of the dropouts, 44.1 percent of the secondary school population; 17s, 29.2 *v* 34.5; 18s, 23.5 *v* 16.6; 19s, 8.3 *v* 3.3; 20s and older 3.2 *v* 1.5.

7. The older the dropout the more likely he is to be a male; the male/female split for the 16 years olds is 54.2:45.8; for the 17s, 55.9:44.1; for the 18s, 62.8:37.2; for the 19s, 71.7:28.3; for those 20 and older, 67.0:33.0. The younger the dropout the lower the grade left, which was expected, but the age/grade distribution does not suggest the kind of age retardation found in the classical studies. These are not, by and large, students who have had to repeat one or two grades lower down the system. And in our study they were calibrated not only by the nominal grade but by the number of credits earned, so the grade definition should be an *actual* one. The interesting finding is *not* that 41.6 percent of the 16 year old dropouts left the equivalent of Grade 10, which was more or less where they belonged according to normal school progress, *but* that slightly more left Grade 11 than grade 9 (27.5 percent *v* 27.2) and a small group actually left grades 12 and 13. There has, of course, been some age retardation. For example 38.4 percent of the 19 year olds left Grade 12 and 37.6 Grade 13. Depending upon the precise month of birth this could be considered normal flow. But 17.8 percent of that age group of dropouts left the equivalent of Grade 11; 4.9, Grade 10 and 1.3, Grade 9. Unfortunately we do not gather age/grade statistics in Ontario so it is not possible to relate the dropout pool to the enrollment pool, but the evidence of the age distribution by itself and the grade distribution by itself does not lead one to believe that there is over representation of older dropouts from earlier grades. In other words the evidence does not support the classical finding.

8. Nor have our surveys substantiated the finding that the dropout is a failing student with a history of failure. F level students represented, in 1974/75, 27.7 percent of the total, and D level ones another 33.0. This was a higher total than we found in the earlier smaller sample studies. Because these marks are teacher assigned, based on tests, examinations and classroom performance, they are not standardized. And individual teacher's marks will vary from class to class and grade to grade. A large number of teachers marking the same type of work simply compounds the variance. This is not a criticism of teachers; it is a statement of human condition. With the best will in the world and the most rigorous control conditions some subjects cannot be marked as 'objectively' as others. And, in order to mark objectively a large number of papers or tests of a single subject, there must be a common content and common agreement as to the relative importance of various portions of the material being tested and the relative importance of various kinds of ability being demonstrated. To mark objectively between sets of subjects there must be scaling of the marks so that the kind of performance which can produce 100 percent on a mathematics examination can produce something better than 81 on an English examination. The overall achievement school-mark commonly used is either the average of all the subject marks given that term or that year (with each subject having equal value), or the weighted average (with each subject being valued according to its credit value), or—for some purposes— the average of the best x (usually 6) subject marks.

More tripe is talked about marks and marking than any other aspect of education. If there is one failure whch can legitimately be attributed to the education establishment it is the failure to make clear to the public what is involved in marking, the advantages and disadvantages of different marking systems, and the limitations of using marks for comparison or selection purposes. That being so, it was indefensible, of course, that we should use school marks as one of the identification variables for dropouts. There were two reasons why we did so, two reasons and one justification: (1) Since the classical studies all calibrated dropouts by achievement (the better ones using standardized tests, which are not themselves without disadvantages), we either had to include some sort of achievement reference or resign ourselves to being unable to assess the classical finding. (2) The Ministry wanted us to look at dropouts by their achievement levels. In Ontario there are no standardized test marks for all systems at all grade levels. To administer a set of tests would have been to engage in a whole new study dimension, a very expensive one. All systems have teacher marks in a readily accessible form and all but one agreed to provide them (average marks), on the dropout lists; so we used them. The justification is that whatever limitations teacher marks have they are the common assessment device in our system, and when we had objective test data in Ontario they were found to correlate highly with teacher marks.

9. If we take a C average or better as a demonstraton that the student can successfully complete any program of the secondary school, then over 39 percent of the dropouts can be so described, and 33 percent might be considered marginal students (the Ds). However, a D of an academically rigorous program might well be a C in a less demanding one (and vice versa, the successful C of one program might drop to the level of D in another). A good deal of student choice is permitted in our secondary system. If we assume that the student chooses those subjects and programs (within whatever rules apply at the time) which offer the best likelihood of success, then the cross tabulation of achievement level and program (or achievement level and subject) would enable us to "discount" the higher marks of the less rigorous programs and raise the lower marks of the more rigorous ones. If the students' choices were entirely rational and our guidance/identification perfect we should be able to "shuffle" students into a subject and program distribution by expected achievement level and see precisely what proportion of the dropout stream really would be "failing" to successfully complete *any* of the programs or subject combinations offered by our schools. Students, unfortunately, are like other human beings—not very rational. Some perceive themselves as failures because they cannot attain the standards they or their families set for themselves in the subjects and programs where they feel they *ought* to be able to succeed. Some persist in choosing subject alternatives of a type they already have found difficult, perhaps because of intrinsic interest but more commonly because of constraints such as pre-requisites for later stages of study. With our large number of subject

titles, the provision of subject-related marks for every dropout would have been too great a burden for the schools. And, in any case, we do not have a cross classification of the entire Ontario enrollment by subject and marks, so what would we compare our findings to?

Using the average achievement date provided we can say the following: Overall only about 28 percent of the dropouts of 1974/75 were failing according to their school marks; more males than females. The F level students were 65.5 percent male *v* 34.5 female; the distribution of the sub sample for whom we had sex and achievement data was 57.8 *v* 42.2. The high achievement dropouts are disproportionately female. The higher the marks, the higher the proportion of dropouts who are females. They represent roughly 58 percent of the As, 54 of the Bs, 47 of the Cs, 41 of the Ds and 35 of the Fs. On the whole the higher the year left, the lower the probability that the dropout will be a failing student.

If we consider the subsample for which we have both achievement and program data we find that 65 percent of the failing (F) students came out of a 4-year program, although only 61 percent of the total sample left such a program; 9 percent came from a 2-year program (8 percent) and 26 percent from a 5-year (31 percent). In other words the proportion of 2-year program failure dropouts is about what one would expect, the proportion of 5-year ones much less. From these data let us "discount" the failures to a less demanding program. The 375 Fs from the 5-year stream might have been able to succeed with a less rigorous set of level five courses or "settled" for a four year graduation. This is also true of the 504 Ds from the 5-year stream. These two groups represent 48 percent of the 5-year loss stream. With their deletion that stream would have been reduced to almost half its volume. Similarly if we had been able to guide the 951 Fs and the 1342 Ds of the 4-year stream into less rigorous subjects or into a 2-year program, we could have deleted almost 65 percent of that program's losses. But that is too simplistic a view of the problem. The dropping out decision is a complex one. Dropping out is not primarily a response to failing school marks and eliminating failure will not eliminate dropouts, as the findings of the classical studies suggested might well be the case.

10. From the interviews we are able to show something of the family background of the dropouts. These data also upset the classical findings. The 1974/75 interview names were a 3% random sample drawn from the dropout lists of our cooperating schools. From the list of over 600 names interviewers phoned one dropout after another. If after several tries (3 at least) they were unable to contact the person, or if he/she would not agree to be interviewed, that name was simply relinquished. The resulting 423 completed interviews represent the equivalent of over 5% of our questionnaire respondents. It is a coincidence that only ten of the interviewed students were dropouts who did not return our questionnaires. We did not intend the interview sample to be a sample of the questionnaire respondents, although obviously there would be a close resemblance between the two. The difficulty with telephone interviewing of youth is to get hold of them. There is seldom a reluctance to be interviewed. But young people simply are not at home for a large part of each day. This is particularly true of the males, so the interview sample is rather more heavily female than we wished. Another problem in dealing with these age groups is that they are highly mobile. In the big cities many of the telephone numbers were wrong, and many of the students had left home. In the north they had frequently left town. Nevertheless the interviews were a valuable (though expensive) part of the study. They provide humanity to the numbers. Because there were eight interviewers working at different times on the 1973-74 and 1974/75 samples, in order to analyse the information we had to use a structured interview. However, interviewers were instructed to pose their lead question and then let the student talk, noting as much of his response as seemed reasonable—particularly noting verbatim any striking wording or the details of unusual cases. For the most part this book only uses the statistical tabulations to give background to the general description of the dropout stream derived from the school lists and the questionnaires. Some of the interview comments were included in our Ministry report but generally they have not yet been analysed and reported. From our interviews we can say that:

Most dropouts (almost 89 percent) have both parents alive and the bulk of them (over 71 percent) live at home with their parents. We did not find that a large number of dropouts come from single parent homes. Nor are most of them the children of foreign-born immigrants. More have fathers who are Canadian-born than is general for their fathers' age cohorts in the Ontario population (males aged 45-64, dropout sample Canadian-born fathers, 72 percent; Ontario, 1971 census, 69 percent). This was also true of the dropouts' mothers (females, aged 45-64, dropout sample Canadian born-mothers, 73 percent; Ontario, 1971 census 71). The most common language spoken in the home was English. Only a few of the dropouts come from unilingual non-English speaking homes (i.e., where English is never spoken).

11. The 'classical' dropout very frequently comes from the lowest social stratum of society, whether status is defined by education or occupation. His family subsists on public welfare or his parents (or single parent) frequently are unemployed and if employed are unskilled labourers who have incomplete elementary school education (well below the median for their communities). This is not true of the dropout stream we have been studying, although clearly there is a small subgroup for whom the description is accurate. Our dropouts' fathers compare very favourably in educational status with the Ontario male population of similar age: a very slightly higher proportion have little education (equivalent to completion of grade 8 or less, the dropout sample 42.3 percent *v* the Ontario males aged 40-65, 1971 census, 41.9); a very slightly smaller proportion have the highest educational status (at least one university degree, 6.2 percent *v* 6.6); a larger proportion have some secondary schooling (equivalent to grades 9-11 inclusive, 32.7 percent *v* 28.5) and fewer have secondary school graduation (equivalent to grades 12 and 13, 15.6 percent *v* 18.2). If we reduce the fathers' occupational descriptions to 7 broad classifications using the Census of Canada labels we find that they are somewhat more heavily represented among factory workers, craftsmen, transportation and communication workers (46.1 percent *v* 39.7), almost equally frequently employed in service and recreation jobs (10 *v* 9 percent), and are actually less commonly employed as general labourers or in primary industries (7.2 *v* 9.6 percent). They are much more frequently described as having technical and professional jobs (25 percent *v* 17), and probably a certain amount of self definition upgrading has oc-

curred.* They are much less frequently to be found in clerical or sales occupations (0.9 *v* 8.2 percent and 6.3 *v* 10.1 percent).

However one classifies and discounts these reports of father's education and occupation, there is absolutely no question but that they upset the classical findings. On the basis of reported schooling we would divide them into 9 percent at the highest status (some university or a university degree), 26 percent at status II (upper secondary schooling or post-secondary non-university), 51 percent at status III (grades 7-10 inclusive) and 14 percent at status IV (grade 6 or less). On the basis of reported occupation we would divide them into 25 percent at the highest status (professional and technical), 17 percent at status II (clerical, sales, and service and recreation jobs), 46 at status III (craftsmen, factory production, transportation and communication jobs), and 12 at status IV (unskilled, labourers and primary workers). This of course is a crude division. Many of the service and recreation jobs are as unskilled as those of status IV and their earnings are probably lower, but they are less "dirty" jobs. Most of the technical jobs in status I are about the same economic level as the better clerical jobs, but they pay less than the successful sales jobs.

12. Income is a good indicator of life style, particularly if one can use net per capita-dependent figures rather than salaries. We tried in the interviews to make it clear that we were inquiring about the total money going into that home (including the portion contributed by the dropout, if any), after taxes, including such things as children's welfare, disability or pension payments. It is hard to judge the accuracy of the reported figures; 253 of the 423 interviewed students provided data. The incomes reported seemed at first glance to be high, 37% were above our top specified category of $12,000 per year ($250 per week). But when we compared them with earnings reported by the Ontario Ministry of Treasury, Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs we saw them in better perspective. About 9 percent of the students' families had incomes in our lowest category (under $6000 per year) *v* 11 percent of Ontario families in 1974; 55 percent had family incomes of between $6000 and $12,000 per year *v* 24; and 37 percent above that *v* 65

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*But in the Census some self-definition upgrading occurs too.

percent. The dropouts' median family income was about $11,500 p.a., the median family income in Ontario in 1974 was about $14,000. If we accept these income figures, we might say that the dropouts come from somewhat lower income families than is general for the Ontario population, but relatively few of them are among the "poor". If we consider income in relation to the number of dependents we would have to add, however, that a larger proportion should be classified as poor—perhaps as high as 24%.*

13. The questions on the interview about family size produced some very intersting data, particularly when they are analysed in terms of why the students left school and who influenced their decision (which we summarize later on). The dropouts were asked the number of their brothers and sisters, and from their replies we can estimate the average size of their families. It is much higher than the general figure for Ontario, 4.3 children *v* 3.6. This upholds the classical dropout finding. The most common ordinal position for the dropout was 'middle' child (45 percent). Only 20 percent were the eldest in their family—which disposes of the theory that a large number of dropouts are taken out of school to help support the family. There is such a group but it is not large. Almost half the dropouts who were interviewed (who answered the question) had had a brother or sister who had dropped out of school (194, 47.5 percent). The large size of the group is emphasized when we add that 36 students did not answer the question and 83 had already reported that they were the eldest in the family.

14. We answered the question "Why did they leave?" by statistics yielded by responses to the first question on the questionnaire (which listed 11 specified reasons and gave a small space to write in others, and which asked the dropout to designate which was his first, second, third and fourth reason). The interview started by asking the student to recap his reasons for

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*Using a combination of income and number of children living at home and defining as poor families under $6000 p.a. income, those with more than 1 child at home and an income up to $8400, those with more than 2 children at home and an income up to $9600 and those with more than 3 at home and an income up to (and including) $12,000 p.a.

leaving school, providing alternative wordings under the major headings and space for "other" under each main type. The interviewer was instructed to let the student "run on" and note as many types of reason as were mentioned. Then the question was asked "Which is the main reason?" Sorting out the precise relationship of the subordinate reasons one to the other requires a certain amount of judgement and is to some extent arbitrary But we are sure that we have been reasonably accurate and that the *total* reasons mentioned are all inclusive (up to a total of four per person).

The relative importance of different reasons shifted somewhat over the three years of our surveys and is modified depending upon the sub sample being analysed, but the essential picture did not change—economic reasons for leaving school were always the most important and the chief single reason for leaving school was to take a job or to look for one. Twenty-eight percent of the 1974/75 questionnaire respondents left school to take a job and another 12 percent because they needed money and intended to look for a job. The males were more prominent in these categories than the females, although they were important categories for the females too. The split on the "job" category, according to sex, was 66 *v* 34 and on the "needed money" one was 60 *v* 40 (the sample for which we have data on sex and the first reason for leaving school consists of 7969 persons, 57 male: 43 female).

Although the "job" reason for leaving school was the most important single one, it was not equally important for dropouts from all school years. The proportion grows steadily from year-1 to year-4. For example, 25.7 percent of the Grade 9 dropouts left to take a job, 27.2 of the 10s, 27.5 of the 11s, and 31.7 of the 12s. Then the proportion drops, but not back to the Grade 11 level; in Grade 13 it was 29 percent. "Needed money" grows in importance; the higher the grade the larger the proportion giving it as the main reason for leaving school—9.4 percent of the Grade 9s, 10.8 of the 10s, 11.8 of the 11s, 12.5 of the 12s and 12.7 of the 13s. The number of those who left to take a job peaked, both absolutely and in percentage terms, at the D level of achievement; D students formed 35% of the "job" category, 604 dropouts; the next highest sub group were the C students, 562, 32.5 percent of the "job" category. The A, B and F level dropouts are under represented among those giving this as their main reason for leaving school. The picture is much the same for the "needed money" category as the main reason for leaving school.

15. To assess the family background of the economically motivated dropout we cross classified the interviewed students (166) who had listed this as their main reason for leaving school with their responses on six items of family background information. The Task Force had been asked to judge what evidence existed of "financial need" as a major reason for leaving school. We concluded that on the whole this was not an economically "select" group, but these dropouts cannot be said to represent great need. The data suggest a family background of modest working class, not the poor. Taken in conjunction with family size it might be said to show some financial need. We cross classified the same items for three broad tabulations of interviewed dropouts—those who left school for economic reasons, personal reasons and school-related reasons. More "needy" youngsters showed up among those who stated they left for personal than for any other reasons. The school-related reasons are given by those from more affluent families than the other groups.

16. There were four specified school-related reasons for leaving school, two of them general negative statements and two directed at specific conditions (dissatisfaction with teachers, dissatisfaction with courses or programs). The general statements were more common: 10.3 percent of the dropouts "just hated school and could stand it no longer" and gave that as the main reason why they left; 9.8 were "failing anyway and feltt they might just as well leave" and gave that as their first reason. The comparable percentage criticizing teachers was 4.6 and criticizing courses was 4.3. The importance of school-related reasons for dropping out shifts according to the sub group being analysed. And these reasons are somewhat understated if one considers only their incidence as first reasons. Their representation among the total (i.e., all the times mentioned, whatever the rank order of importance) is higher than would be suggested by the percentages shown above. They clearly play a role as contributing reasons. In 1974/75 "hated school" was the third most frequently given

reason, "failing anyway" the fourth, "dissatisfied with teachers" the sixth, and "dissatisfied with courses" the eighth.

As the main reason for leaving school, in the 1974/75 survey, "hated school" was reported by slightly more females than one would expect (they were 44.7 percent of the category *v* 43.5 of the sub sample for whom we have sex and a first reason for leaving school). As a main reason it steadily diminishes in importance the higher the grade level: that category involves 14.3 percent of the grade 9 dropouts and reduces grade by grade to 6.4 percent of the grade 13s. By achievement level, except for the B students, it increases as a reason for leaving school as the marks descend: 9.4 percent of the A dropouts gave this first reason, 7.2 of the Bs, 10.6 of the Cs and a very similar proportions of Ds (10.1) and 12.8 of the Fs. As a main reason for leaving, the "failing anyway" category was also what we expected: the lower the achievement level the greater the representation (from 1.2 percent of the As to 18.0 of the Fs). It is a first reason of greater importance in the lower than the upper grades (involving 10.6 percent of the Grade 9s, 10.8 of the 10s and 11s, 7.6 of the 12s, and 9.1 of the 13s), and much more commonly cited by males than females (10.6 percent of the males are in this category, 8.5 of the females).

17. Considering the total reasons for leaving school given by the questionnaire respondents: school-related ones were listed 6473 times out of 16,161. With 8141 respondents and 4 possible choices (i.e., all the reasons given by a student might have been school-related ones) the total might have been 32,564. "Failing" represents 31.6 percent of the total reasons given by males and only 27.0 of those of females; "hated school", 30.3 percent and 32.2; dissatisfaction with courses, 20.2 and 22.0; and dissatisfaction with teachers 17.9 and 18.8. In other words the males are preoccupied with failing and also hate school; the females hate school and are also concerned about failing. Specific criticisms are more frequently heard from the girls than the boys. The interviews of 127 students show school-related prime reasons for leaving school and provide information on the six family background items used for cross classification. We found that rather more live at home than is true of the other two groups (88 percent *v* 81 of the economically motivated ones and 73 percent of those who left school for personal reasons) and that they come from smaller sized

families, though still larger than the Ontario average. Almost two-thirds of their fathers and mothers had left school before completion of the equivalent of Grade 12.

18. We answered the question "What are they doing now?" by analysing the responses to question four of the questionnaire, which specified ten activities and provided space for writing in one "other" (as well as writing in the nature of the firm or type of work being done or the name of the school of those studying full or part-time). This picture was amplifed by information from the interviews; sets of questions appropriate to five types of activity. We have reported four of the groups—those working, unemployed, studying at school (i.e., have re-entered secondary school) and studying elsewhere. The fifth group of "other" includes a varied set of activities and they have been described briefly. On the questionnaire, students had the opportunity to mention more than one activity and indicate which they regarded as their main one. In general the rank ordering was obvious (e.g., working full-time and studying part-time) but this was not always the case.

The largest group of dropouts was working when they were contacted. Over the three years the working group decreased somewhat. It varied from about 67 to 62 percent of the total. The second largest group was unemployed and over the three years it grew steadily from about 15 to 28 percent. In the 1974/75 survey 49 percent of the dropouts were working full-time and another 13 part-time; the combined unemployed (those looking for work, travelling or just hanging around home) represented 28.4 percent and the combined studying groups (full-time and part-time), 5.4. The males were over-represented among those working full-time (64:36 male to female *v* 56:44 for the subsample for whom we have a first "activity" and sex). The females were over-represented among those working part-time, studying (both groups) and unemployed, particularly the unemployed who were looking for work and those who were just hanging around the house.

19. There is an almost unbroken progression—the higher the grade left, the greater the proportion of its dropouts who are working. Over half the dropouts of each of the upper three grades were employed full-time (51 to 53 percent) and another 13 to 16 percent were employed part-time. The dropouts from grades 9

and 10 were not so fortunate—42 percent of the 9s and 46 of the 10s were employed full-time and another 9 and 11 percent part-time. We grouped the ten activity categories into four: working, unemployed, studying and other. On this basis the significant relationship between probability of working and the grade of the dropout is even more evident. Fourteen percent of the total had left grade 9; that grade's working-dropouts equalled 12% of the working category. The figures for the other grades (total given first) were 24.9 *v* 22.9; 28.1 *v* 29.3; 20.2 *v* 21.9; 12.8 *v* 14.3.

20. There were two sources of information about the dropouts' jobs—3515 of those who returned questionnaires wrote their employer's name and their job title (and sometimes notes) on the forms; and the largest group interviewed (207 of the 423) were working. Using the 1971 Census of Canada occupational classifications we coded their job descriptions and roughly allocated them by status. The statistics probably err in overstating the higher status jobs, the professional/technical/managerial level, because some dropouts used occupational titles loosely. They were "managers" of a small store, for example, or "printers" when in fact they were general assistants rather than skilled workers. Even when in doubt, we took the job title at face value. From the questionnaires we found that about two percent of the dropouts had obtained professional/managerial/technical sorts of jobs, rather more females than would be expected (females were 40 percent of the total group *v* 43.8 of this category). Females formed three quarters of the clerical workers (about ten percent of the jobs were at this level) and 57 percent of those who were employed in sales work (11 percent of the jobs). All the other jobs might well be classified as unskilled or semi-skilled although sometimes they were described by use of skilled labels. These are the jobs classified as "service/recreation", "transportation/communication", "factory/production process", "general labour/primary industries" and "other". They represent 77 percent of the total but 86 percent of the working males are in these categories. Even this figure does not accurately portray the preponderance of male employment in these occupations, because one combined group "service/recreation" has a large number of females in the former while the males concentrate in

the latter, balancing the total somewhat; 59 percent of this category were females *v* 40 for the total sub-sample. In brief, except for a few talented (or lucky? or well connected?) dropouts, those who leave secondary school without graduating obtain semi-skilled and unskilled jobs. This is particularly true of the males. A larger proportion of males than females find employment, but those girls who do obtain jobs get better ones, in clerical, sales or service employment. However, their jobs are better only in "status" and (probably) conditions of work; they are not as well paid.

21. The interviews corroborate this picture but suggest that a larger proportion of dropouts found jobs of highest status. We think these interview statements should be somewhat discounted. According to their data four percent of the dropouts had found managerial, professional or technical jobs, 18 percent clerical, 8 sales, and the rest (70 percent) were employed in the other five occupational categories. The salaries reported confirm the need to discount many of the job labels. There were a few high earners, mostly in the performing arts or in sales. But a surprising number of dropouts were being paid below the minimum wage of that year—18 percent earned $75 per week or less, and 19 percent between $76 and $100; 60 percent of the sub-sample earned $125 or less per week. The higher the wage the more likely it will be a male earning it. We compared the reported earnings with Ontario wages for 1974 and 1975 and concluded that on the whole these youngsters were reporting wages appropriate for semi-skilled and unskilled jobs, wages well below the Ontario averages of those years. The minimum hourly wage for that period was between $2.00 and $2.40 an hour ($80-96 for a 40-hour week). We asked for wages for a "normal" week; many hourly paid workers regularly work overtime and we suspect the figures we were given (for those paid by hourly rates — i.e., all the group below "sales") were for the longer week. In the year in question, Ontario's average per capita wage was $5,572 ($107.15 per week). And the average weekly wage for the industrial composite was $181.43, varying by sector from $130.86 in "service" to $258.68 in "construction".

22. The second largest group of dropouts were unemployed when we contacted them. Because of written comments on the forms of the pilot studies we had included, by 1974/75, three

categories of unemployed (those looking for work, those just bumming around and those travelling around). From the written-in notes in the "other" category and letters and phone calls it is evident that not all those who are "travelling" regard themselves as being unemployed. And there are some who report that since leaving school they have only had a series of odd jobs. It is difficult to come to a satisfactory definition of unemployed; it depends whether one is classifying by objective condition or by perception. One respondent may consider he is unemployed and looking for work, another whose daily round is identical may consider he is unemployed and bumming around. We did not ask how active was the respondent's search for work. Similarly it is difficult to obtain uniformity of use of a term such as "odd jobs". From the number of jobs reported by some of the interviewed unemployed, it is evident that they held the jobs for a very short time indeed. How long is the duration of an odd job? An "odd" job is probably a matter of perception. But is it employees' or employers' perception? The situation is probably clear where the employer hires specifically for a few days or a few weeks, stating from the outset that the job will only be available for that time. Where this is not the case and (for whatever reason) the employee is laid off or fired after a short time, he tends to regard it as having been an "odd job". In any case, among the questionnaire respondents there were 2332 dropouts who gave unemployed as one of their reported current activities, 2149 (28 percent of the sub sample) who reported this as their main or first activity, the bulk of whom (24.2 percent) were looking for work. Among the written-in activities reported there were 274 "other" (i.e., neither working nor studying). They include a few categories which might well be regarded as unemployed, but the dropouts obviously did not think our specified unemployed categories appropriate for their cases. There were a few "travelling" (17 persons); "staying at home" (15); "taking care of home" (43); these probably do not consider themselves unemployed (this is not their *own* home being cared for but the family home, the other group was classified as "getting (got) married"); "moving/transferring" (27); "doing casual odd jobs/unemployed" (65); "living" (9); ill (46).

For the statistical analysis we treated the written-in responses separately; their inclusion would not greatly change the main distributions. Grouping the three unemployed categories we found that females were over-represented (47.2 percent were females *v* 43.7 in the sub sample). Taking all reported activities (not just the first or main one) the lower the grade the higher the probability that the dropout will be unemployed, and the lower the achievement level the higher the probability that the dropout will be unemployed. So the employment outlook is not bright for the Grade 9 or 10 dropout; nor is it bright for the dropout whose last school average mark was around the F or D level. Over the three years of study the unemployed group has grown steadily. The 1972-73 study only covered dropouts from grades 11-13 and the 1973-74 one covered the 9-13 ones only from the two big city systems in the sample (about two thirds of the total). They were small studies and their samples do not accurately reflect the province as a whole. It was not until the 1974/75 survey that we achieved a satisfactory sample (and even that had the weaknesses noted at the beginning of the report) so precise comparison cannot be made. But that is not to say that an accurate general picture cannot be given. Roughly one *can* say that the proportion unemployed increased from about 10 percent to 20-21 to 28.

23. The studying dropouts were of particular interest to the Ministry Task Force on Dropouts. By the time they completed our questionnaires these dropouts has returned to secondary school (their former one or another) or were taking educational programs in other institutions (community colleges, universities, trade schools); some were studying part-time in night school and others were in work/study situations in the armed forces, were apprentices, or were studying by correspondence. In the statistical analysis we kept the various groups separate and concentrated on those who reported studying as their main activity (i.e., those studying full-time, for the most part). Grouping them they represent something over 5 percent of the questionnaire sample in 1974/75 and over 6 percent the year before. The group seems to be fairly stable. Females are over-represented (about 51 percent *v* 44 in the sample). Grades 9 and 13 are over-represented. These are the two grades accounting for a greater number of study-dropouts than their proportions in the sub-sample warrant—17 percent of the study-dropouts were from grade 13 *v* 13 percent of the sub-sample; the grade 9 figures were 20 *v* 14. We were not surprised to find that it is the

(academically) more capable dropouts who were studying elsewhere. The A level students represented slightly over 1 percent of the sample but more than 4 percent of the (combined) "studying" first activity group; the comparable figures for the Bs and Cs were 9 *v*15; 30 *v* 35. It is the D and F level dropouts who were under-represented among those studying. Their comparable figures were 34 *v* 30 and 26 *v* 16.

24. We found that the majority of the students had been thinking of dropping out for some time; this was not a sudden decision. In 1974/75 this was the response of 66 percent. In 1973/74 this reply was even more common; depending upon the sub-sample being studied, it was given by 80-82 percent. We disposed decisively, in our opinion, with the cliches that the introduction of the credit system and division of the school year into semesters (rather than terms) had affected the dropout flow. These were mentioned as being one factor in the decision to leave school, but literally in only a handful of cases.

25. On the whole, the students reported that their parents approved the decision to leave school. In 1973/74 when this question was first used we had such varied replies (with fathers approving and mothers not, and *vice versa*) that the question was reworded for the 1974-75 survey. But the general picture did not change—students reported approval in 60 percent or more of the cases. Although they generally approve, mothers disapprove more if their sons drop out of school than if their daughters do. Fathers show a greater tendency to treat the decision of a son the same way as the decision of a daughter; and they show more disapproval than the mothers do (although the disapproving fathers were still a minority). We found that the great difference is between the parents in big cities and the rest. The majority of the city fathers and mothers did *not* approve their childrens' decisions to leave school (55 percent of the mothers and about the same proportion of fathers).

The data of the interviews suggest that we should discount this parental approval. Parents may well have "given up" rather than actually approved. The majority of the interviewed students reported that their parents initially had disapproved and that there had been a wearing down process. Most had discussed the decision with their parents before they actually left school. But quite a large number reported that the parents more or less left the decision to them. There was some shifting of position between the time of the questionnaire reply (soon after leaving school—usually within one month) and the interview (between four and fourteen months later). Many parents had become "resigned" to the decision over that time, particularly if the dropout was employed. Some who had acquiesced became more positive in their disapproval, particularly if the dropout was unemployed.

When the questionnaire replies a [illegible]alysed by the dropout's school grade and average achievement level, the parental approval really looks irrational. We see this if we look at the disapprovals: In 1974/75 the mothers' disapprovals-by-grade peak in grade 11 with somewhat greater representation than would be expected—thus the grade 9 mothers' disapprovals represent 14.1 percent of the disapprovals and the grade 9 portion of the sample is slightly less, 13.9; the grade 10 figures are identical 24.6 percent; the grade 11 disapprovals are 30.2 percent of the total disapprovals *v* 28.4 of the sample; for grade 12 the figures are about the same (20.1 *v.* 20.3), but for grade 13, where the student is the closest to school completion, they are 11.0 *v* 12.8. In other words there is less disapproval of dropping out than the sample's representation of the grade 13 students would warrant. The fathers' disapproval is much the same. And when we look at the analysis by achievement level, the approval/disapproval appears just as irrational—the higher the average mark, the greater proportion of students of that mark category who report mothers and fathers approval of their dropping out of school. Thus in 1974/75, 70 percent of the A level dropouts, 68 percent of the Bs and Cs, 63 of the Ds and 62 of the Fs reported that their mothers approved the decision to leave school. The As' proportion of approving fathers was even higher (72 percent).

It had been suggested (in briefs to the Task Force) that the heavy increase in dropping out of secondary school was due to the "counter culture", peer group influence which was anti-establishment and anti-education. There is no statistical or other evidence to support this contention. Criticisms of school and schooling, teachers, administrators, programs and courses there were, of course, and these have already been noted above. But we found, from the interviews, that most of the dropouts' friends are still in school and, if anything, this attracts them back as re-entrants if the work world proves to be unsatisfactory. If their friends' advice was a factor (either way: to stay in or to drop out) the respondents did not admit it. In fact they, for the most part, specifically reject the suggestion that their friends influenced them. The small number of cases reporting peer influence show more influence to stay in school than to leave it.

When asking about students' plans the questionnaire was quite specific. Each survey asked about plans for "next September", and the specified categories were biassed in favour of job-related and study-related plans. We specified ten categories and all but two refer to jobs or types of study. The two were: "To care for home" and "Have no specific plans". There was also an "other" category with space to write in a reply. We received 962 written-in plans, most of which could have been classified under the specified titles but they were treated separately in the report. Their largest group (770 of the total) reported hopes or plans designed to get a better job. We analysed the dropouts' first and second plans and discussed the total plans (mentioned) under three general headings: "job-related", "study- related" and "personal and other". The largest first plan in 1974/75 was to stay at the same job (24 percent), with another 16 percent intending to get a better job; 22 percent wanted to return to secondary school and another 12 percent to attend some other kind of educational institution; almost 13 percent had no specific plans; 12 percent were in the "other" (extremely varied) group, and fewer than 2 percent expected to be taking care of their homes.

When we compared the questionnaire replies of 1972/73, 1973/74 and 1974/75 the picture (by rank order of frequency of reply) was pretty stable—the most common plan was to stay at the current job, followed by seeking a better job and then by returning to the same secondary school. However, over the years the proportions had shifted slightly; the 1974/75 replies were less job-oriented than the earlier ones (which is in keeping with our finding that the incidence of unemployed dropouts had grown). In the earier years dropouts expecting to keep the same job had been about 40 percent (72/73) or 30 percent (73/74), and those hoping to get a better job, 27 percent and 17. When grouped into "job", "study" and "personal" categories it was noted that the girls' plans were more prone to be study and personal ones; they were under-represented on the job plans. By grade, the 13s were prone to have study plans, and the 11s and 12s to have job plans. The grade 9 dropouts were under-represented on both study and job plans, and the 10s on study plans. Among the group with no plans, females were disproportionately represented (50.4 percent of the 942). Second plans tend to complement the first ones, so it was not surprising to find that the figures for "total plans mentioned" shift the emphasis toward study plans. Those working full-time and planning *primarily* to stay at their job or seek a better one, *also* plan to take a variety of part-time educational courses (sometime).* Those studying full-time who *primarily* intend to continue full-time studies, *also* plan to seek part-time employment. The former are more numerous than the latter.

28. The final portion of the report deals with re-entries, dropouts who had returned to the same schools. It reports the questionnaire responses of a sample of 1974/75 re-entries from one large urban school system. There is also some data on re-entries to be gleaned from the large dropout questionnaire sample (about 5 percent gave "studying" as their first activity and 15 percent gave "return to same secondary school" as their first plan). The interview data, however, show that the majority of the dropouts (about 70 percent) do not intend *ever* to return to school, and that they believe the completion of secondary school to be unimportant or irrelevant to their careers. Only 25 percent thought it very important and another 18 fairly important.

From the re-entries' responses it is evident that there is a small stream of dropouts who move in and out of school a number of times. Some dropouts, in the first move, do not intend to leave permanently. There is awareness that they can return if they wish, and they leave school to "take a breather". When they find the outside world less satisfying than expected, they return; and some shortly thereafter leave for a second time etc., etc. In 1974-75 in our study system there were 1511 students classified as re-entrants.

By the time we had weeded out various groups who had never been dropouts (by our definition), we were left with a list of

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*The interviews reveal that most plans are vague.

1079, 192 of whom replied to our questionnaires (18 percent). We found that our sample included dropouts in all stages of re-entering and re-dropping out. Fewer than half were still in school when they replied to our questionnaire (i.e., had not stayed for even one term). Our respondents gave a detailed history of their entries and exits, as well as the usual dropout information. Among our September 1975 cohort, the earliest exit had occurred in 1971; the largest number had left in 1974, 1973 or 1975 (in that order); 38 percent had left during the previous academic year. Re-entering and re-dropping out is a male activity; the males outnumber the females 2:1. Re- entrants are to be found in all grades of the secondary school. Their percentage distribution (on the school lists) was as follows: year 1, 17.1 percent; year 2, 23.0; year 3, 25.5; year 4, 18.4; year 5, 14.8. The enrollment pool to which they should be related would vary according to the year they dropped out. For convenience we shall relate them to 1974. The 1974 September enrollment was as follows: year 1,29.4 percent; year 2, 23.5; year 3, 20.8; year 4, 16.5; year 5, 9.8. In other words there is a low incidence of re-entering of grade 9 dropouts (only 17.1 *v* 29.4 percent); re-entering to grade 10 is about the level that might be expected; re-entering the three upper grades is higher than would be expected, particularly into grades 11 and 13. The former probably reflects the parental image of a "reasonable" length of time to go to school (which we commented on when discussing the dropout rates by grade and parental approval/disapproval), the latter probably is a response to the notion that the student "might just as well finish properly, having come so far".

In brief, re-entrants are likely to be those dropouts who left the three higher grades of secondary schools. However, they do not stay long in school, and the probability of their leaving again is high (particularly if they are over 19 years of age). To a greater extent than other dropouts their parents did not approve their leaving school (and this is likely to be one factor in the return decision). To a greater extent than other dropouts, they were unemployed (and this is likely to be the main reason why they returned to school). Rather more than other dropouts, they left school because of school-related reasons (they were failing anyway; they hated school; they criticized teachers or programs) and yet they have not settled down in the outside world. Their prognosis for completion is not high. Some re-entries move in and out of school several times before they finally decide to quit—so, without detailed data it is very difficult to show their "stages". Overall, net re-entries represent about 3 percent of the enrollment each year.

29. Statistical studies such as those described here are but the beginning of research on the problems created by large numbers of students leaving school prematurely. Their prime purpose is to provide the basis for further work. OISE personnel are now completing the design of a simulation model which will use these data to estimate the effects which various school policy changes might have on the dropout flow, and a prediction model which will enable us to estimate the loss rates of a system given various social and economic changes in the communities served by its schools. We are subjecting these statistics to further analysis and replicating old studies which tried to account for the share of the variance in loss rates attributable to in-school variables (as compared with the shares attributable to community and family characteristics). We are also assessing the dropouts who entered the labour force, as new competitors in the world of work. However, in our opinion these do not represent the chief value of survey projects. This study's chief value has been in demonstrating that the popular stereotype of the "dropout" is outmoded. It does not apply to present day Ontario. For some years there has been a stigma attached to non-completion of secondary school. Objection to the term "dropout" gave rise to such euphemisms as "step-outs", "withdrawals", "retirements". But whatever term was used, it carried pejorative connotations. The classic dropout was seen as a failure, a quitter, a delinquent, the product of the slums who was likely to be a welfare burden all his life, lazy, shiftless and irresponsible. No description could be more unjust or inaccurate. False stereotypes linger on long after their bases (if they ever existed) have been eroded. In this study we have put to rest, without question, this stereotype of the dropout.

TABLE 1
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY ENROLLMENT, DROPOUTS AND NO SHOWS BY PARTICIPATING BOARDS

Board Code	Enrollment (1974-75)	Within-Year Dropouts (1974-75) No.	%	No Shows (September 1975) No.	%	Total No.	%
011	1,723	129	7.5	61	3.5	190	11.0
021	5,888	756	11.0	293	4.2	1,049	15.2
022	3,243	316	9.7	188	5.8	504	15.5
031	1,675	240	14.3	74	4.4	314	18.7
032	7,545	587	7.8	433	5.7	1,020	13.5
033	2,613	248	9.5	93	3.6	341	13.1
042	4,603	240	5.2	*150*	*3.3*	*390*	*8.5*
043	17,804	1,371	7.7	582	3.3	1,953	11.0
044	4,311	303	7.0	157	3.6	460	10.6
045	8,092	472	5.8	582	6.5	1,054	12.3
051	6,549	309	4.7	268	4.1	577	8.8
053	17,169	1,096	6.4	1,168	6.8	2,264	13.2
054	8,491	661	7.8	*684*	*8.1*	*1,345*	*15.9*
061	12,726	1,196	9.4	*246*	*1.9*	*1,442*	*11.3*
062	14,333	977	6.8	200	1.4	1,177	8.2
063	5,684	228	4.0	*47*	*0.8*	*275*	*4.8*
071	21,896	1,359	6.2	*709*	*3.2*	*2,068*	*9.4*
072	14,248	693	4.9	*365*	*2.6*	*1,058*	*7.5*
073	14,721	826	5.6	*430*	*2.9*	*1,256*	*8.5*
074	34,591	4,861	14.1	*2,546*	*7.4*	*7,407*	*21.5*
081	15,833	1,055	6.7	555	3.5	1,610	10.2
082	4,751	404	8.5	*209*	*4.4*	*613*	*12.9*
083	638	38	6.0	20	3.1	58	9.1
085	2,941	226	7.7	84	2.9	310	10.6
092	6,008	479	8.0	175	2.9	654	10.9
102	9,038	957	10.6	*347*	*3.8*	*1,304*	*14.4*
Total	248,114	20,027	8.1	*10,666*	*4.3*	*30,693*	*12.4*

NOTE: The estimated no shows are italicized.

TABLE 2
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
ESTIMATED SECONDARY SCHOOL DROPOUTS BY REGION OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Region	Number of systems in region (1)	Number of systems in the sample (2)	Total secondary school enrollment in region (3)	Region's total enrollment as a percentage of provincial enrollment (4)	Total secondary school enrollment of schools in the sample (5)	Percentage of total enrollment in the sample (6)	Number of dropouts reported in sample boards (7)	Drop-out rate (8)	Estimated number of dropouts (9)
Northwestern	9	1	17,812	3.0	1,723	9.7	129	7.5	1,336
Midnorthern	9	2	27,727	4.7	10,131	36.5	1,072	10.6	2,939
Northeastern	10	3	25,617	4.3	11,833	46.2	1,075	9.1	2,331
Western	8	4	69,089	11.7	34,810	50.4	2,386	6.9	4,767
Midwestern	7	3	52,308	8.9	32,209	61.6	2,066	6.4	3,348
Niagara	6	3	59,937	10.2	32,743	54.6	2,401	7.3	4,375
Central	16	8	231,350	39.2	109,619	47.4	9,462	8.6	19,896
Eastern	7	1	41,645	7.1	6,008	14.4	479	8.0	3,332
Ottawa Valley	7	1	64,165	10.9	9,038	14.1	957	10.6	6,801
									(49,125)
Total	79	26	589,650	100.0	248,114	42.1	20,027	8.1	47,762

NOTES:

Col. (2): Central region, with eight participating boards, was originally sampled as west central and east central. so as to preserve the relationship with the boards which had particpated in the two earlier OISE studies.

Col. (6): Column 5 ÷ column 3.

Col. (8): Column 7 ÷ column 5.

Col. (9): Column 8 x column 3. The sum of the regional estimates (49,125) is 8.3% of enrollment. The figure 47,762 is 8.1% of enrollment.

TABLE 3
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
SECONDARY SCHOOL DROPOUTS AND DROPOUT RATES BY PARTICIPATING BOARD

Board code	Number of dropouts	Dropout rate (percentage of enrollment)
011	129	7.5
021	756	11.0
022	316	9.7
031	240	14.3
032	587	7.7
033	248	9.5
042	240	5.2
043	1,371	7.7
044	303	7.0
045	472	5.8
051	309	4.7
053	1,096	6.4
054	661	7.8
061	1,196	9.4
062	977	6.8
063	228	4.0
071	1,359	6.2
072	693	4.9
073	826	5.6
074	4,861	14.1
081	1,055	6.7
082	404	8.5
083	38	6.0
085	226	7.7
092	479	8.0
102	957	10.6
Total	20,027	8.1

TABLE 4
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
DROPOUT RATES BY SEX AND PARTICIPATING BOARD

Board code	Male	Female
011	7.7	6.9
021	12.2	9.6
022	10.9	7.7
031	14.8	13.6
032	8.7	6.8
033	11.4	7.4
042	5.5	4.9
043	8.3	6.9
044	8.9	5.0
045	6.2	5.3
051	5.1	4.3
053	7.2	5.2
054	8.5	6.7
061	10.8	7.7
062	7.6	5.8
063	5.0	2.9
071	6.7	5.3
072	5.6	4.1
073	6.0	4.6
074	15.1	12.8
081	7.6	5.5
082	10.1	6.6
083	5.4	6.2
085	8.8	6.6
092	8.6	7.1
102	12.4	8.7

Note: There was no sex designation given for 265 dropouts. The rates by sex, therefore, are slightly deflated.

TABLE 5
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SRUVEY DROPOUT RATES BY GRADE LEFT AND PARTICIPATING BOARD

Board code	Grade 9	10	11	12	13
011	5.2	11.2	7.2	5.7	7.6
021	7.6	10.7	11.8	12.6	10.9
022	5.2	7.8	11.4	10.1	16.1
031	9.5	11.5	19.6	12.6	10.9
032	4.1	7.8	9.2	9.3	12.0
033	3.9	8.0	13.8	12.3	13.0
042	4.2	4.4	7.3	5.5	5.0
043	4.7	8.7	8.6	8.5	8.2
044	5.2	8.0	7.8	5.7	9.7
045	4.7	6.2	6.4	5.8	7.0
051	2.8	5.2	5.5	4.5	4.6
053	3.4	6.4	8.3	5.3	11.1
054	4.5	7.2	7.7	9.1	11.0
061	5.4	9.4	10.6	11.2	10.1
062	3.1	6.9	9.1	6.8	10.9
063	1.4	3.0	5.0	4.6	4.8
071	2.4	6.2	7.8	7.0	8.2
072	1.3	4.3	5.8	4.7	6.1
073	3.3	5.9	6.5	5.9	6.2
074	9.5	12.6	13.7	11.5	12.7
081	3.3	6.9	8.6	7.4	9.1
082	3.9	8.5	9.2	8.4	12.3
083	4.7	3.2	4.4	10.1	14.3
085	1.6	7.2	9.1	12.7	14.9
092	3.2	7.5	7.8	7.8	11.7
102	6.7	10.3	11.6	10.8	17.7

Note: There was no grade description given for 1470 dropouts. Dropout rates by grade, therefore, are deflated somewhat particularly in Board 074.

TABLE 6
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
LOWEST AND HIGHEST SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES BY PARTICIPATING BOARD

Board code	Lowest	Highest
011	6.6	8.8
021	4.1	15.1
022	*	*
031	*	*
032	5.2	12.7
033	5.9	18.9
042	3.6	6.3
043	2.7	20.8
044	4.4	8.6
045	2.3	19.3
051	1.8	12.4
053	3.8	11.1
054	5.1	16.5
061	1.8	24.4
062	4.4	24.2
063	2.4	6.6
071	2.2	28.2
072	3.7	6.8
073	2.8	9.6
074	4.9	52.4
081	2.0	15.7
082	6.5	16.9
083	*	*
085	4.8	9.7
092	4.3	15.4
102	2.0	26.2
Total	1.8	39.7

* Only one school in board.

Note: 1. The range for board 22 is not complete because all its schools did not participate in the study.

2. Total number on schools in the study, 239.

TABLE 7a
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
DROPOUT RATES BY REGION AND SEX

Males

Region	Male enrollment in the sample	Male dropouts	Dropout rate
North western	884	68	7.7%
Mid northern	5,135	607	11.8
North eastern	6,089	618	10.1
Western	18,638	1,401	7.5
Mid western	16,802	1,193	7.1
Niagara	16,811	1,414	8.4
Central	56,635	5,344	9.4
Eastern	3,112	269	8.6
Ottawa Valley	4,539	562	12.4
Total	128,645	11,476*	8.9

Females

Region	Female enrollment in the sample	Female dropouts	Dropout rate
Northwestern	839	58	6.9%
Midnorthern	4,996	448	9.0
Northeastern	5,744	454	7.9
Western	16,172	977	6.0
Midwestern	15,407	836	5.4
Niagara	15,932	965	6.1
Central	52,984	3,951	7.5
Eastern	2,896	207	7.1
Ottawa Valley	4,499	390	8.7
Total	119,469	8,286*	6.9

* Excludes a portion of 265 dropouts for whom no sex was reported – dropout rates slightly deflated.

TABLE 7b
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
DROPOUT RATES BY REGION AND GRADE

Grade 9

Region	Grade 9 enrollment in the sample	Grade 9 dropouts	Dropout rate
Northwestern	518	27	5.2%
Midnorthern	2,672	182	6.8
Northeastern	3,271	158	4.8
Western	9,647	452	4.7
Midwestern	8,571	306	3.6
Niagara	8,362	310	3.7
Central	29,611	1464	4.9
Eastern	1,631	52	3.2
Ottawa Valley	2,431	163	6.7
Total	66,714	3114*	4.6

Grade 10

Region	Grade 10 enrollment in the sample	Grade 10 dropouts	Dropout rate
Northwestern	402	45	11.2%
Midnorthern	2,608	255	9.8
Northeastern	2,897	243	8.4
Western	8,542	632	7.4
Midwestern	7,932	501	6.3
Niagara	8,123	582	7.2
Central	26,516	2151	8.1
Eastern	1,549	116	7.5
Ottawa Valley	2,266	233	10.3
Total	60,835	4758*	7.8

* Excludes a portion of 1470 dropouts for whom no grade was reported – dropout rates deflated.

TABLE 7b (continued)

Grade 11

Region	Grade 11 enrollment in the sample	Grade 11 dropouts	Dropout rate
Northwestern	374	27	7.2%
Midnorthern	2,307	268	11.6
Northeastern	2,600	302	11.6
Western	7,458	582	7.8
Midwestern	7,046	533	7.6
Niagara	7,204	652	9.1
Central	23,700	2223	9.4
Eastern	1,250	98	7.8
Ottawa Valley	1,999	233	11.7
Total	46,732	4918*	10.5

Grade 12

Region	Grade 12 enrollment in the sample	Grade 12 dropouts	Dropout rate
Northwestern	297	17	5.7%
Midnorthern	1,830	216	11.8
Northeastern	2,146	223	10.4
Western	6,012	428	7.1
Midwestern	5,846	357	6.1
Niagara	6,278	504	8.0
Central	19,336	1588	8.2
Eastern	1,065	83	7.8
Ottawa Valley	1,630	177	10.9
Total	44,440	3593*	8.1

* excludes a portion of 1470 dropouts for whom no grade was reported –dropout rates deflated.

TABLE 7b (continued)

Grade 13

Region	Grade 13 enrollment in the sample	Grade 13 dropouts	Dropout rate
Northwestern	132	10	7.6%
Midnorthern	714	89	12.5
Northeastern	919	111	12.1
Western	3,151	246	7.6
Midwestern	2,814	271	9.6
Niagara	2,776	258	9.3
Central	10,456	1003	9.6
Eastern	513	60	11.7
Ottawa Valley	712	126	11.7
Total	22,187	2174*	9.8

* Excludes a portion of 1470 dropouts for whom no grade was reported – dropout rates deflated.

TABLE 8
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLE* BY AGE AND SEX

Age		Male	Female	Total
15 or younger	No.	515	389	904
	Row %	57.0	43.0	6.2
	Col. %	6.0	6.4	
16		2652	2239	4891
		54.2	45.8	33.6
		31.1	37.0	
17		2232	1758	3990
		55.9	44.1	27.4
		26.2	29.1	
18		2018	1195	3213
		62.8	37.2	22.0
		23.7	19.8	
19		813	321	1134
		71.7	28.3	7.8
		9.5	5.3	
20 or older		295	145	440
		67.0	33.0	3.0
		3.5	2.4	
Column total	Number	8525	6047	14572
	Percentage	58.5	41.5	100.0

* The reader should note: there were 20,027 dropouts reported, but schools did not list every information item for every dropout. So in the tables which follow there will be varying totals.

$x^2 = 167.6$
d.f. = 5
sig. at $\leqslant .001$ level

TABLE 9
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLE BY AGE AND YEAR OF PROGRAM

		Year					
Age		1	2	3	4	5	Total
	No.	499	296	55	7	1	858
15 or younger	Row %	58.2	34.5	6.4	0.8	0.1	6.1
	Col. %	23.3	8.1	1.4	0.2	0.1	
		1303	1989	1314	164	14	4784
16		27.2	41.6	27.5	3.4	0.3	33.7
		60.9	54.4	34.2	5.8	0.8	
		254	979	1497	987	181	3898
17		6.5	25.1	38.4	25.3	4.6	27.5
		11.9	26.8	39.0	34.7	10.6	
		63	317	719	1102	928	3129
18		2.0	10.1	23.0	35.2	29.7	22.1
		2.9	8.7	18.7	38.8	54.6	
		14	54	196	423	414	1101
19		1.3	4.9	17.8	38.4	37.6	7.8
		0.7	1.5	5.1	14.9	24.3	
		6	23	60	158	163	410
20 or older		1.5	5.6	14.6	38.5	39.8	2.9
		0.3	0.6	1.6	5.6	9.6	
Column total	Number	2139	3658	3841	2841	1701	14180
	Percentage	15.1	25.8	27.1	20.0	12.0	100.0

$x^2 = 7680.4$

d.f. = 20

sig. at $\leqslant .001$ level.

TABLE 10
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLE BY AGE AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

Age		A	B	C	D	F	Total
	No.	8	44	97	132	208	489
15 or younger	Row %	1.6	9.0	19.8	27.0	42.5	4.6
	Col. %	4.5	4.5	3.2	3.7	7.0	
		66	256	879	1195	1177	3573
16		1.8	7.2	24.6	33.4	32.9	33.4
		37.5	26.3	28.8	33.9	39.7	
		44	283	920	1008	779	3034
17		1.5	9.3	30.3	33.2	25.7	28.4
		25.0	29.1	30.1	28.6	26.3	
		43	291	817	817	499	2467
18		1.7	11.8	33.1	33.1	20.2	23.1
		24.4	29.9	26.8	23.2	16.8	
		11	62	256	289	223	841
19		1.3	7.4	30.4	34.4	26.5	7.9
		6.3	6.4	8.4	8.2	7.5	
		4	36	84	85	77	286
20 or older		1.4	12.6	29.4	29.7	26.9	2.7
		2.3	3.7	2.8	2.4	2.6	
Column total	Number	176	972	3053	3526	2963	10690
	Percentage	1.6	9.1	28.6	33.0	27.7	100.0

$x^2 = 234.5$
d.f. = 20
sig. at $\leqslant .001$ level

TABLE 11
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF GRADE 11 to 13 DROPOUTS BY SEX, 1972-73, 1973-74, and 1974-75

Sex	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75
Male	58.7	60.0	56.6
Female	41.3	40.0	43.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N =	2843	3187	10676

TABLE 12
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF GRADE 11 to 13 DROPOUTS BY AGE, 1972-73, 1973-74, and 1974-75

Age	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75
15 or younger	0.2	0.8	0.7
16	12.6	16.8	17.8
17	29.0	29.9	31.8
18	33.9	33.8	32.9
19	18.0	13.9	12.3
20 or older	6.3	4.8	4.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N =	2600	2579	8383

TABLE 13
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF GRADE 11 to 13 DROPOUTS BY YEAR OF PROGRAM, 1972-73, 1973-74, 1974-75

Year	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75
Grade 11	43.6	45.5	46.0
Grade 12	37.6	35.7	33.6
Grade 13	18.8	18.8	20.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N=	2655	2626	10,676

TABLE 14
PERCENTAGE DESTRIBUTION OF GRADE 11 to 13 DROPOUTS BY ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL, 1972-73, 1973-74, 1974-75

Achievement level	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75
Grade A	2.6	0.7	1.6
Grade B	13.7	7.3	11.2
Grade C	34.2	30.4	34.6
Sub-total	50.5	38.4	47.4
Grade D	19.1	34.3	32.4
Grade F	30.4	27.3	20.2
Sub-total	49.5	61.6	52.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N =	2427	2346	6496

TABLE 15
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE BY REGION

Region	Number of dropouts		Number of questionnaires received		Response %	
Northwestern	129		23		17.8	
Midnorthern	1,072		724		67.5	
Northeastern	1,075		481		44.7	
North		2,276		1,228		53.9
Western	2,386		1,475		61.8	
Midwestern	2,066		1,266		61.3	
Niagara	2,401		984		41.0	
West		6,853		3,725		54.3
Central		9,462	2,741			28.9
Eastern	479		277		57.8	
Ottawa Valley	957		170		17.8	
East		1,436		477		31.1
Total		20,027		8,141		40.6

TABLE 16
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE BY PARTICIPATING BOARD

Board Code	Number of dropouts	Number of questionnaires received	Response rate %
011	129	23	17.8
021	756	589	77.9
022	316	135	42.7
031	240	43	17.9
032	587	271	46.2
033	248	167	67.3
042	240	207	86.3
043	1,371	73	53.3
044	303	236	77.9
045	472	301	63.8
051	309	161	52.1
053	1,096	839	76.6
054	661	266	40.2
061	1,196	278	23.2
062	977	622	63.7
063	228	84	36.8
071	1,359	306	22.6
072	693	362	52.2
073	826	398	48.2
074	4,861	637	13.1
081	1,055	719	68.2
082	404	171	42.3
083	38	31	81.6
085	226	117	51.8
092	479	277	57.8
102	957	170	17.8
Total	20,027	8,141	40.6

TABLE 17
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE BY SIZE OF BOARD

Size of board	Percentage of sample boards	No. of dropouts	No. of questionnaires	Response rate	Percentage of questionnaires
2500 or less	11.6	407	97	23.8	1.2
2501 - 5000	19.2	1,421	898	63.2	11.0
5000 – 10,000	26.9	3,977	1818	45.7	22.4
10,000 – 20,000	34.6	8,002	4386	54.8	53.9
over 20,000	7.7	6,220	942	15.1	11.5
Total	100.0	20,027	8141	40.6	100.0

TABLE 18
RANK ORDER OF FREQUENCY OF FIRST REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL
1972-73, 1973-74, 1974-75

Reason	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75
Job offer (took a job)	2	1	1
Needed money, personal	5	4	2
Needed money, family	8		
To get married	N/A	9	10
Medical, health	N/A	8	7
Other personal	6	5.5*	5
Failing anyway	4	2	4
Dissatisfied with teachers	N/A	5.5*	6
Dissatisfied with courses	N/A	7	8
Hated school	1	3	3
To travel	N/A	11	11
No reason, drifted out	3	10	9
Left home, so left school	7	N/A	N/A

*Tied

NOTES

1. By rank order, 1 = most frequently chosen; where two or more responses are tied for position, the positions are averaged. For example in this table, two responses are tied for fifth position in 1973-74; rank order 5 and 6 are averaged to 5.5 for each.

2. In 1972-73 the students, though given the opportunity to tick as many reasons as they wished, were not asked to rank order or indicate the first. Therefore, in 1972-73 the ranking is determined by the total number of times the reason was given; total exceeds the number of respondents. In the later two surveys the students were given the opportunity to choose 4 reasons (if they wished) and told to rank in order of importance i.e., first, second, etc.

3. The list of reasons is longer than that given in any survey (see sample of the questionnaire in the Appendix) because on the second and third questionnaires the list was slightly changed and extended in order to delete reasons of low response and add ones which had been frequently written-in. N/A = not applicable; that reason was not specified that year.

4. This table does not include the residual category "other".

5. "Needed money" was not differentiated after 1972-73; the bracket therefore compares to both the earlier figures.

TABLE 19
RANK ORDER OF FREQUENCY OF FIRST REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL BY SEX
1972-73, 1973-74, 1974-75

Males

Reason	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75
Job offer	1	1	1
Needed money, personal	3	3	2
Needed money, family	7		
To get married	N/A	11	11
Medical, health	N/A	9	9
Other personal	6	6	5
Failing anyway	4	2	3
Dissatisfied with teachers	N/A	5	6
Dissatisfied with courses	N/A	8	7
Hated school	2	4	4
To Travel	N/A	10	10
Drifted out	5	7	8
Left home, so left school	8	N/A	N/A

TABLE 20

Females

Job offer	2	1	1
Needed money, personal	5	6	3
Needed money, family	8		
To get married	N/A	5	7
Medical, health	N/A	9	5
Other personal	3	3	2
Failing anyway	6	4	6
Dissatisfied with teachers	N/A	7.5	8
Dissatisfied with courses	N/A	7.5	9
Hated School	1	2	4
To Travel	N/A	11	11
No reason, drifted out	4	10	10
Left home, so left school	7	N/A	N/A

TABLE 21
RANK ORDER OF FREQUENCY OF FIRST REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL BY GRADE 1972-73 (1), 1973-74 (2), 1974-75 (3)

	9			10			11			12			13		
Reason	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Job offer (took a job)	–	–	1	–	–	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
Needed money, personal	–	–	4	–	–	3.5	3	4	2	3	2	2	4	3.5	2
Needed money, family	–	–		–	–		8			7			7		
To get married	–	–	10	–	–	10	N/A	9	10	N/A	9	9	N/A	10	11
Medical/health	–	–	6	–	–	7	N/A	7.5	6.5	N/A	7	7	N/A	9	7
Other personal	–	–	5	–	–	5	6	6	3	4	6	3	5	8	5
Failing anway	–	–	3	–	–	3.5	5	2	4	5	3	4	6	1	3
Dissatisfied with teachers	–	–	8	–	–	6	N/A	5	6.5	N/A	5	8	N/A	6	8
Dissatisfied with courses	–	–	9	–	–	9	N/A	7.5	8	N/A	8	6	N/A	5	4
Hated school	–	–	2	–	–	2	1	3	5	2	4	5	3	3.5	6
To travel	–	–	11	–	–	11	N/A	11	11	N/A	11	11	N/A	11	10
Drifted out	–	–	7	–	–	8	4	10	9	6	10	10	2	7	9
Left home, left school	–	N/A	N/A	–	N/A	N/A	7	N/A	N/A	8	N/A	N/A	0*	N/A	N/A

*0 = reason not given

TABLE 22
RANK ORDER OF FREQUENCY OF FIRST REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL BY ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL 1972-73 (1), 1973-74 (2), 1974-75 (3)

	A			B			C			D			F		
Reason	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Job offer	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	3	2	1
Needed money, personal	4	2.3	5.5	5	3	2	5	2	2	3	4	2	5	4	4
Needed money, family	0*			7.5			8			7.5			7		
To get married	N/A	2.3	7.3	N/A	2	7	N/A	8	9	N/A	8	10	N/A	11	10
Medical/health	N/A	2.3	4	N/A	4.5	5	N/A	9	6	N/A	9.5	6	N/A	7	8
Other personal	1	0	2	3	6.5	3	4	4	4	4	6	3	6	6	5
Failing anyway	0	0	0	6	10.5	8	6	7	5	6	2	4	1	1	2
Dissatisfied with teachers	N/A	0	5.5	N/A	6.5	9	N/A	6	8	N/A	5	7	N/A	5	6
Dissatisfied with courses	N/A	0	7.3	N/A	8	6	N/A	5	7	N/A	7	9	N/A	9	9
Hated school	0	0	3	2	4.5	4	1	3	3	1	3	5	2	3	3
To travel	N/A	0	7.3	N/A	10.5	11	N/A	11	11	N/A	11	11	N/A	10	11
Drifted out	3	0	10	4	9	10	3	10	10	5	9.5	8	4	8	7
Left home, left school	0	N/A	N/A	7.5	N/A	N/A	7	N/A	N/A	7.5	N/A	N/A	8	N/A	N/A

*0 = reason not given

TABLE 23
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MALES' FIRST PLANS BY THEIR FIRST REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL

First plans		Economic	School-related	Personal	Other	Total
	No.	798	206	73	40	1117
Stay at job	Row %	71.4	18.4	6.5	3.6	27.1
	Col. %	42.0	16.0	11.8	12.5	
		349	195	77	25	646
Better job		54.0	30.2	11.9	3.9	15.7
		18.4	15.1	12.5	7.8	
		246	250	133	58	687
Return to same		35.8	36.4	19.4	8.4	16.6
secondary school		13.0	19.4	21.6	18.1	
		70	122	55	65	312
Return to different		22.4	39.1	17.6	20.8	7.6
secondary school		3.7	9.5	8.9	20.2	
		23	22	13	10	68
Trade school		33.8	32.4	19.1	14.7	1.6
		1.2	1.7	2.1	3.1	
		102	97	34	40	273
Community college		37.4	35.5	12.5	14.7	6.6
		5.4	7.5	5.5	12.5	
		15	6	7	13	41
University		36.6	14.6	17.1	31.7	1.0
		0.8	0.5	1.1	4.0	
		20	21	14	4	59
Night school		33.9	35.6	23.7	6.8	1.4
		1.1	1.6	2.3	1.2	
		1	2	5	0	8*
Care for home		12.5	25.0	62.5	0.0	0.2
		0.1	0.2	0.8	0.0	
		134	181	120	23	458
No plans		29.3	39.5	26.2	5.0	11.1
		7.1	14.0	19.4	7.2	
		141	188	86	43	458*
Other		30.8	41.0	18.8	9.4	11.1
		7.4	14.6	13.9	13.4	
Column	Number	1899	1290	617	321	4127
total	Percentage	46.0	31.3	15.0	7.8	100.0

$x^2 = 662.1$
d.f. = 27
sig. at $\leqslant$ .001 level

*For the chi square test the category "care for home" was combined with "other"

TABLE 24
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALES' FIRST PLANS BY THEIR FIRST REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL

First plans		Economic	School-related	Personal	Other	Total
	No.	401	124	89	26	640
Stay at job	Row %	62.7	19.4	13.9	4.1	19.9
	Col. %	36.6	13.5	9.6	9.6	
		256	144	108	24	532
Better job		48.1	27.1	20.3	4.5	16.5
		23.3	15.6	11.7	8.9	
		80	104	180	28	392
Return to same secondary school		20.4	26.5	45.9	7.1	12.2
		7.3	11.3	19.4	10.4	
		36	92	64	42	234
Return to different secondary school		15.4	39.3	27.4	17.9	7.3
		3.3	10.0	6.9	15.6	
		15	17	17	16	65
Trade school		23.1	26.2	26.2	24.6	2.0
		1.4	1.8	1.8	5.9	
		64	64	51	51	230
Community college		27.8	27.8	22.2	22.2	7.2
		5.8	6.9	5.5	18.9	
		9	6	2	15	32
University		28.1	18.8	6.3	46.9	1.0
		0.8	0.7	0.2	5.6	
		16	26	46	2	90
Night school		17.8	28.9	51.1	2.2	2.8
		1.5	2.8	5.0	0.7	
		6	6	100	2	114
Care for home		5.3	5.3	87.7	1.8	3.5
		0.5	0.7	10.8	0.7	
		104	162	166	32	464
No plans		22.4	34.9	35.8	6.9	14.4
		9.5	17.6	17.9	11.9	
		110	176	104	32	422
Other		26.1	41.7	24.6	7.6	13.1
		10.0	19.1	11.2	11.9	
Column total	Number	1097	921	927	270	3215
	Percentage	34.1	28.6	28.8	8.4	100.0

$x^2 = 845.4$
d.f. = 30
sig. at $\leqslant$ .001 level.

TABLE 25
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL OPEN-ENDED REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL BY TYPE OR REASON AND SEX

Type of reason		Male	Female	Total
	No.	107	75	182
Economic	Row %	58.8	41.2	15.4
	Col. %	16.0	14.7	
		319	227	546
School-related		58.4	41.6	46.3
		47.7	44.4	
		31	40	71
Personal		43.7	56.3	6.0
		4.6	7.8	
		49	52	101
Other		48.5	51.5	8.6
		7.3	10.2	
		163	117	280
Transfers		58.2	41.8	23.7
		24.4	22.9	
Column	Number	669	511	1180
total	Percentage	56.7	43.3	100.0

$x^2 = 8.9$
d.f. = 4
sig. at .05 level.

TABLE 26
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL SURVEY OPEN-ENDED REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL, BY TYPE OF REASON AND YEAR OF PROGRAM

Type of reason		Year 1	2	3	4	5	Total
	No.	22	39	39	33	43	176
Economic	Row %	12.5	22.2	22.2	18.8	24.4	15.5
	Col. %	11.1	16.2	14.6	14.2	22.3	
		65	99	127	121	110	522
School-related		12.5	19.0	24.3	23.2	21.1	46.1
		32.8	41.1	47.6	51.9	57.0	
		10	15	19	19	2	65
Personal		15.4	23.1	29.2	29.2	3.1	5.7
		5.1	6.2	7.1	8.2	1.0	
		9	17	32	24	16	98
Other		9.2	17.3	32.7	24.5	16.3	8.7
		4.5	7.1	12.0	10.3	8.3	
		92	71	50	36	22	271
Transfers		33.9	26.2	18.5	13.3	8.1	23.9
		46.5	29.5	18.7	15.5	11.4	
Column total	Number	198	241	267	233	193	1132
	Percentage	17.5	21.3	23.6	20.6	17.0	100.0

$2^2 = 111.8$
d.f. = 16
sig. at ≤ .001 level.

TABLE 27
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MALES' TOTAL OPEN-ENDED REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL BY TYPE OF REASON AND YEAR OF PROGRAM

Type of reason		Year 1	2	3	4	5	Total
	No.	14	24	26	19	21	104
Economic	Row %	13.5	23.1	25.0	18.3	20.2	16.1
	Col. %	12.1	16.1	18.4	14.7	19.3	
		36	66	66	69	68	305
School-related		11.8	21.6	21.6	22.6	22.3	47.4
		31.0	44.3	46.8	53.5	62.4	
		4	9	5	9	1	28
Personal		14.3	32.1	17.9	32.1	3.6	4.3
		3.4	6.0	3.5	7.0	0.9	
		4	11	13	10	10	48
Other		8.3	22.9	27.1	20.8	20.8	7.5
		3.4	7.4	9.2	7.8	9.2	
		58	39	31	22	9	159
Transfer		36.5	24.5	19.5	13.8	5.7	24.7
		50.0	26.2	22.0	17.1	8.3	
Column total	Number	116	149	141	129	109	644
	Percentage	18.0	23.1	21.9	20.0	16.9	100.0

$x^2 = 71.1$
d.f. = 16
sig. at $\leqslant .001$ level

TABLE 28
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALES' TOTAL OPEN-ENDED REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL, BY REASON TYPE AND YEAR OF PROGRAM

Type of Reason		Year 1	2	3	4	5	Total
	No.	8	15	13	14	22	72
Economic	Row %	11.1	20.8	18.1	19.4	30.6	14.8
	Col. %	9.8	16.3	10.3	13.5	26.2	
		29	33	61	52	42	217
School-related		13.4	15.2	28.1	24.0	19.4	44.5
		35.4	35.9	48.4	50.0	50.0	
		6	6	14	10	1	37
Personal		16.2	16.2	37.8	27.0	2.7	7.6
		7.3	6.5	11.1	9.6	1.2	
		5	6	19	14	6	50
Other		10.0	12.0	38.0	28.0	12.0	10.2
		6.1	6.5	15.1	13.5	7.1	
		34	32	19	14	13	112
Transfers		30.4	28.6	17.0	12.5	11.6	23.0
		41.5	34.8	15.1	13.5	15.5	
Column total	Number	82	92	126	104	84	488
	Percentage	16.8	18.9	25.8	21.3	17.2	100.0

TABLE 29
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL OPEN-ENDED REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL, BY TYPE OF REASON AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

Type of Reason		Year A	B	C	D	F	Total
	No.	1	15	59	47	22	144
Economic	Row %	0.7	10.4	41.0	32.6	15.3	18.7
	Col. %	5.3	15.2	23.0	19.8	13.8	
		8	47	104	121	86	366
School-related		2.2	12.8	28.4	33.1	23.5	47.4
		42.1	47.5	40.5	51.1	53.8	
		2	4	18	10	14	48
Personal		4.2	8.3	37.5	20.8	29.2	6.2
		10.5	4.0	7.0	4.2	8.8	
		1	7	22	15	17	62
Other		1.6	11.3	35.5	24.2	27.4	8.0
		5.3	7.1	8.6	6.3	10.6	
		7	26	54	44	21	152
Transfers		4.6	17.1	35.5	28.9	13.8	19.7
		36.8	26.3	21.0	18.6	13.1	
Column	Number	19	99	257	237	160	772
total	Percentage	2.5	12.8	33.3	30.7	20.7	100.0

TABLE 30
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSE ON FIRST ACTIVITY BY SEX

First activity		Male	Female	Total
Working full-time	No.	2366	1308	3674
	Row %	64.4	35.6	48.7
	Col. %	55.7	39.8	
Working part-time		473	495	968
		48.9	51.1	12.8
		11.1	15.1	
Studying full-time		150	140	290
		51.7	48.3	3.8
		3.5	4.3	
Studying part-time		47	67	114
		41.2	58.8	1.5
		1.1	2.0	
Got married		5	78	83
		6.0	94.0	1.1
		0.1	2.4	
Had baby		3	48	51
		5.9	94.1	0.7
		0.1	1.5	
Unemployed, looking		963	860	1823
		52.8	47.2	24.2
		22.7	26.1	
Unemployed, bumming		117	125	242
		48.3	51.7	3.2
		2.8	3.8	
Unemployed, travel		54	30	84
		64.3	35.7	1.1
		1.3	0.9	
Other		71	138	209
		34.0	66.0	2.8
		1.7	4.2	
Column total	Number	4249	3289	7538
	Percentage	56.4	43.6	100.0

$x^2 = 218.8$
d.f. = 3
sig. at $\leqslant .001$ level

Note: for x^2 in this and tables 31 and 32 the two studying the two working and the three unemployed categories were combined, and the "married" and "baby" ones were combined with "other". That is, for x^2 purposes there are four categories.

TABLE 31
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSE ON FIRST ACTIVITY BY YEAR OF PROGRAM

First activity		Year 1	2	3	4	5	Total
Working	No.	429	827	1049	744	496	3545
full-time	Row %	12.1	23.3	29.6	21.0	14.0	48.7
	Col. %	42.1	45.7	51.4	50.6	53.2	
		90	200	268	238	147	943
Working part-time		9.5	21.2	28.4	25.2	15.6	13.0
		8.8	11.0	13.1	16.2	15.8	
		65	64	62	36	46	273
Studying full-time		23.8	23.4	22.7	13.2	16.8	3.8
		6.4	3.5	3.0	2.4	4.9	
		12	25	27	27	18	109
Studying part-time		11.0	22.9	24.8	24.8	16.5	1.5
		1.2	1.4	1.3	1.8	1.9	
		6	24	23	24	3	80
Got married		7.5	30.0	28.8	30.0	3.8	1.1
		0.6	1.3	1.1	1.6	0.3	
		9	16	16	8	0	49
Had baby		18.4	32.7	32.7	16.3	0.0	0.7
		0.9	0.9	0.8	0.5	0.0	
		302	521	478	304	160	1765
Unempl. looking		17.1	29.5	27.1	17.2	9.1	24.3
		29.7	28.8	23.4	20.7	17.2	
		69	69	48	26	20	232
Unempl. bumming		29.7	29.7	20.7	11.2	8.6	3.2
		6.8	3.8	2.4	1.8	2.1	
		9	14	19	21	19	82
Unempl. travel		11.0	17.1	23.2	25.6	23.2	1.1
		0.9	0.8	0.9	1.4	2.0	
		27	50	52	43	23	195
Other		13.8	25.6	26.7	22.1	11.8	2.7
		2.7	2.8	2.5	2.9	2.5	
Column	Number	1018	1810	2042	1471	932	7273
total	Percentage	14.0	24.9	28.1	20.2	12.8	100.0

$x^2 = 240.3$
d.f. = 12
sig. at ≤ .001 level

TABLE 32
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSE ON FIRST ACTIVITY BY ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

First activity	A	B	C	D	F	Total
	37	243	858	926	657	2721
Working full-time	47.4	48.4	51.9	50.7	46.7	49.8
	8	72	229	252	170	731
Working part-time	10.3	14.3	13.9	13.8	12.1	13.4
	7	29	42	45	24	147
Studying full-time	9.0	5.8	2.5	2.5	1.7	2.7
	2	4	34	20	12	72
Studying part-time	2.6	0.8	2.1	1.1	0.9	1.3
	1	11	27	16	8	63
Got married	1.3	2.2	1.6	0.9	0.6	1.2
	0	5	8	14	9	36
Had baby	0.0	1.0	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.7
	13	103	353	445	425	1339
Unempl. looking	16.7	20.5	21.4	24.3	30.2	24.5
	5	4	32	48	61	150
Unempl. bumming	6.4	0.8	1.9	2.6	4.3	2.7
	0	9	20	26	10	65
Unempl. travel	0.0	1.8	1.2	1.4	0.7	1.2
	5	22	49	36	31	143
Other	6.4	4.4	3.0	2.0	2.2	2.6
Column Number	78	502	1652	1828	1407	5467
total Percentage	1.4	9.2	30.2	33.4	25.7	100.0

$x^2 = 95.1$
d.f. = 12
sig. at $\leqslant$ .001 level

TABLE 33
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WRITTEN-IN ACTIVITIES BY SEX

Written-in activities		Male	Female	Total
Self employed	No.	0	2	2
	Row %	0.0	100.0	0.7
	Col. %	0.0	1.1	
Armed forces		5	1	6
		83.3	16.7	2.0
		4.2	0.6	
Ill		17	29	46
		37.0	63.0	15.7
		14.4	16.5	
Taking care of home		3	40	43
		7.0	93.0	14.6
		2.5	22.7	
"Living"		7	2	9
		77.8	22.2	3.1
		5.9	1.1	
Moving/transferring		9	18	27
		33.3	66.7	9.2
		7.6	10.2	
Getting married		0	11	11
		0.0	100.0	3.7
		0.0	6.3	
Having baby/waiting for baby		0	10	10
		0.0	100.0	3.4
		0.0	5.7	
Travel		8	9	17
		47.1	52.9	5.8
		6.9	5.1	
Convalescing		10	10	20
		50.0	50.0	6.8
		8.5	5.7	
Casual, odd jobs/unemployed		43	22	65
		66.2	33.8	22.1
		36.4	12.5	
Staying at home		2	13	15
		13.3	86.7	5.1
		1.7	7.4	
Jail		3	0	3
		100.0	0.0	1.0
		2.5	0.0	
Other		11	9	20
		55.0	45.0	6.8
		9.3	5.1	
Column total	Number	118	176	294
	Percentage	40.1	59.9	100.0

TABLE 34
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF FIRST CURRENT ACTIVITY (GROUPED) BY SEX

First current activity group		Male	Female	Total
Working	No.	2834	1801	4635
	Row %	61.1	38.9	61.6
	Col. %	66.8	54.8	
Studying		197	206	403
		48.9	51.1	5.4
		4.6	6.3	
Unemployed		1130	1014	2144
		52.7	47.3	28.5
		26.7	30.9	
Other		79	264	343
		23.0	77.0	4.6
		1.9	8.0	
Column total	Number	4240	3285	7525
	Percentage	56.3	43.7	100.0

$x^2 = 218.8$
d.f. = 3
sig. at $\leqslant$ .001 level

TABLE 35
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF FIRST CURRENT ACTIVITY (GROUPED) BY YEAR OF PROGRAM

First current activity group		Year 1	2	3	4	5	Total
Working	No.	518	1026	1315	980	642	4481
	Row %	11.6	22.9	29.3	21.9	14.3	61.7
	Col. %	50.9	56.8	64.5	66.8	69.0	
Studying		77	89	89	62	64	381
		20.2	23.4	23.4	16.3	16.8	5.2
		7.6	4.9	4.4	4.2	6.9	
Unemployed		380	602	543	351	198	2074
		18.3	29.0	26.2	16.9	9.5	28.6
		37.4	33.3	26.6	23.9	21.3	
Other		42	90	91	75	26	324
		13.0	27.8	28.1	23.1	8.0	4.5
		4.1	5.0	4.5	5.1	2.8	
Column total	Number	1017	1807	2038	1468	930	7260
	Percentage	14.0	24.9	28.1	20.2	12.8	100.0

$x^2 = 145.8$
d.f. = 12
sig. at $\leq$ .001 level

TABLE 36
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF FIRST CURRENT ACTIVITY (GROUPED) BY ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

First current activity group		A	B	C	D	F	Total
	No.	45	314	1083	1178	826	3446
Working	Row %	1.3	9.1	31.4	34.2	24.0	63.1
	Col. %	57.7	62.8	65.8	64.5	58.7	
		9	33	76	65	36	219
Studying		4.1	15.1	34.7	29.7	16.4	4.0
		11.5	6.6	4.6	3.6	2.6	
		18	115	404	517	496	1550
Unemployed		1.2	7.4	26.1	33.4	32.0	28.4
		23.1	23.0	24.5	28.3	35.3	
		6	38	84	66	48	242
Other		2.5	15.7	34.7	27.3	19.8	4.4
		7.7	7.6	5.1	3.6	3.4	
Column	Number	78	500	1647	1826	1406	5457
total	Percentage	1.4	9.2	30.2	33.5	25.8	100.0

$x^2 = 95.0$
d.f. = 12
sig. at $\leqslant$ .001 level

TABLE 37
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING DROPOUTS, BY OCCUPATION AND SEX

Occupation		Male	Female	Total
Professional, technical, etc.	No.	45	35	80
	Row %	56.3	43.8	2.3
	Col. %	2.1	2.5	
Clerical		85	255	340
		25.0	75.0	9.7
		4.0	18.0	
Sales		170	229	399
		42.6	57.4	11.4
		8.1	16.2	
Service/recreation		277	396	673
		41.2	58.8	19.1
		13.2	28.0	
Transportation/ communication		82	21	103
		79.6	20.4	2.9
		3.9	1.5	
Production process, etc.		289	42	331
		87.3	12.7	9.4
		13.7	3.0	
General labour/ primary industries		265	36	301
		88.0	12.0	8.6
		12.6	2.5	
Other		889	399	1288
		69.0	31.0	36.6
		42.3	28.2	
Column total	Number	2102	1413	3515
	Percentage	59.8	40.2	100.0

$x^2 = 584.5$
d.f. = 7
sig. at ≤ .001 level

TABLE 38

1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING DROPOUTS, BY OCCUPATION AND YEAR OF PROGRAM

		Year					
Occupation		1	2	3	4	5	Total
	No.	2	13	15	22	21	73
Professional/	Row %	2.7	17.8	20.5	30.1	28.8	2.2
technical, etc.	Col. %	0.6	1.7	1.5	2.9	4.2	
		15	43	86	99	81	324
Clerical		4.6	13.3	26.5	30.6	25.0	9.5
		4.2	5.7	8.5	12.9	16.1	
		42	67	110	89	77	385
Sales		10.9	17.4	28.6	23.1	20.0	11.3
		11.6	8.9	10.8	11.6	15.3	
		64	168	216	136	72	656
Service/recreation		9.8	25.6	32.9	20.7	11.0	19.3
		17.7	22.4	21.3	17.8	14.3	
		6	18	27	35	14	100
Transportation/		6.0	18.0	27.0	35.0	14.0	2.9
communication		1.7	2.4	2.7	4.6	2.8	
		46	73	99	69	34	321
Production process etc.		14.3	22.7	30.8	21.5	10.6	9.5
		12.7	9.7	9.7	9.0	6.8	
		44	80	82	56	30	292
General labour/		15.1	27.4	28.1	19.2	10.3	8.6
primary industries		12.2	10.7	8.1	7.3	6.0	
		142	288	381	259	174	1244
Other		11.4	23.2	30.6	20.8	14.0	36.6
		39.3	38.4	37.5	33.9	34.6	
Column	Number	361	750	1016	765	503	3395
total	Percentage	10.6	22.1	29.9	22.5	14.8	100.0

$x^2 = 135.8$
d.f. = 28
sign. at $\leqslant$ .001 level

TABLE 39
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING DROPOUTS, BY OCCUPATION AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

Occupation		A	B	C	D	F	Total
Professional, technical, etc.	No.	0	8	19	17	10	54
	Row %	0.0	14.8	35.2	31.5	18.5	2.1
	Col. %	0.0	3.4	2.2	1.9	1.7	
Clerical		7	33	82	63	47	232
		3.0	14.2	35.3	27.2	20.3	9.0
		21.9	13.9	9.7	7.1	8.0	
Sales		3	25	105	105	57	295
		1.0	8.5	35.6	35.6	19.3	11.4
		9.4	10.5	12.4	11.9	9.7	
Service/recreation		8	46	160	171	109	494
		1.6	9.3	32.4	34.6	22.1	19.1
		25.0	19.3	18.9	19.3	18.6	
Transportation/ communication		0	7	20	30	13	70
		0.0	10.0	28.6	42.9	18.6	2.7
		0.0	2.9	2.4	3.4	2.2	
Production process etc.		2	14	79	91	53	239
		0.8	5.9	33.1	38.1	22.2	9.2
		6.3	5.9	9.3	10.3	9.0	
General labour/ primary industries		4	26	65	88	52	235
		1.7	11.1	27.7	37.4	22.1	9.1
		12.5	10.9	7.7	9.9	8.9	
Other		8	79	316	321	245	969
		0.8	8.2	32.6	33.1	25.3	37.4
		25.0	33.2	37.4	36.2	41.8	
Column total	Number	32	238	846	886	586	2588
	Percentage	1.2	9.2	32.7	34.2	22.6	100.0

$x^2 = 40.5$
d.f. = 28
sig. at $\leqslant$ .05 level

TABLE 40
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING DROPOUTS BY MONTH LEFT AND LENGTH OF TIME AT PRESENT JOB

Month left		Months 1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	12+	Total
	No.	11	6	7	7	4	35
September	Row %	3.14	17.1	20.0	20.0	11.4	17.2
	Col. %	17.7	11.8	15.9	31.8	16.0	
		7	8	12	8	5	40
October		17.5	20.0	30.0	20.0	12.5	19.6
		11.3	15.7	27.3	36.4	20.0	
		12	5	7	1	5	30
November		40.0	16.7	23.3	3.3	16.7	14.7
		19.4	9.8	15.9	4.5	20.0	
		4	1	1	0	1	7
December		57.1	14.3	14.3	0.0	14.3	3.4
		6.5	2.0	2.3	0.0	4.0	
		4	11	2	3	3	23
January		17.4	47.8	8.7	13.0	13.0	11.3
		6.5	21.6	4.5	13.6	12.0	
		5	3	1	0	1	10
February		50.0	30.0	10.0	0.0	10.0	4.9
		8.1	5.9	2.3	0.0	4.0	
		5	0	3	1	1	10
March		50.0	0.0	30.0	10.0	10.0	4.9
		8.1	0.0	6.8	4.5	4.0	
		5	7	4	1	2	19
April		26.3	36.8	21.1	5.3	10.5	9.3
		8.1	13.7	9.1	4.5	8.0	
		9	8	6	1	2	26
May		34.6	30.8	23.1	3.8	7.7	12.7
		14.5	15.7	13.6	4.5	8.0	
		0	2	1	0	1	4
June		0.0	50.0	25.0	0.0	25.0	2.0
		0.0	3.9	2.3	0.0	4.0	
Column total	Number	62	51	44	22	25	204
	Percentage	30.4	25.0	21.6	10.8	12.3	100.0

TABLE 41
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF UNEMPLOYED DROPOUTS BY MONTH LEFT AND NUMBER OF MONTHS SPENT LOOKING FOR A JOB

Month left		Months 1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	12+	Total
September	No.	9	0	1	1	0	11
	Row %	81.8	0.0	9.1	9.1	0.0	14.3
	Col. %	15.3	0.0	25.0	100.0	0.0	
October		16	0	0	0	1	17
		94.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.9	22.1
		27.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	
November		5	2	2	0	0	9
		55.6	22.2	22.2	0.0	0.0	11.7
		8.5	16.7	50.0	0.0	0.0	
December		2	0	0	0	0	2
		100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6
		3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
January		4	4	0	0	0	8
		50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.4
		6.8	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	
February		5	3	0	0	0	8
		62.5	37.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.4
		8.5	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
March		1	1	0	0	0	2
		50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6
		1.7	8.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	
April		4	0	0	0	0	4
		100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.2
		6.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
May		12	2	0	0	0	14
		85.7	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.2
		20.3	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	
June		1	0	1	0	0	2
		50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	2.6
		1.7	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	
Column total	Number	59	12	4	1	1	77
	Percentage	76.6	15.6	5.2	1.3	1.3	100.0

TABLE 42
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF DROPOUTS' STUDY PROGRAMS OR INSTITUTIONS, BY SEX

Type of study		Male	Female	Total
Another high school/ same school	No.	109	87	196
	Row %	55.6	44.4	32.2
	Col. %	34.9	29.4	
CAAT		41	50	91
		45.1	54.9	15.0
		13.1	16.9	
University		7	9	16
		43.8	56.3	2.6
		2.2	3.0	
Trade school/secretarial		2	19	21
		9.5	90.5	3.5
		0.6	6.4	
Inservice/apprenticeship		53	15	68
		77.9	22.1	11.2
		17.0	5.1	
Correspondence/night school		67	100	167
		40.1	59.9	27.5
		21.5	33.8	
Nursing		0	3	3*
		0.0	100.0	0.5
		0.0	1.0	
Other		33	13	46*
		71.7	28.3	7.6
		10.6	4.4	
Column total	Number	312	296	608
	Percentage	51.3	48.7	100.0

*For purposes of chi square test these categories were combined.

$x^2 = 50.64$

d.f. = 6

Sig. $\leqslant$ .001 level

TABLE 43

1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF DROPOUTS' BY INFLUENCE OF RECENT CHANGE/TIMING OF DECISION AND SEX

Influence of recent change/ timing of decision		Male	Female	Total
	No.	269	195	464
Yes	Row %	58.0	42.0	6.6
	Col. %	6.8	6.2	
		1076	891	1967
No, sudden		54.7	45.3	27.8
		27.3	28.4	
		2592	2048	4640
No, overtime		55.9	44.1	65.6
		65.8	65.3	
Column	Number	3937	3134	7071
total	Percentage	55.7	44.3	100.0

$x^2 = 1.8$
d.f. = 2
n.s.

TABLE 44

1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY NUMBERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF DROPOUTS BY INFLUENCE OF RECENT CHANGE/TIMING OF DECISION AND YEAR OF PROGRAM

Influence of recent change/timing of decision		Year 1	2	3	4	5	Total
	No.	55	109	115	98	61	438
Yes	Row %	12.6	24.9	26.3	22.4	13.9	6.4
	Col. %	5.8	6.4	6.0	7.0	6.9	
		253	461	558	425	220	1917
No, sudden		13.2	24.0	29.1	22.2	11.5	28.0
		26.7	27.3	28.9	30.5	25.0	
		640	1120	1255	872	599	4486
No, overtime		14.3	25.0	28.0	19.4	13.4	65.6
		67.5	66.3	65.1	62.5	68.1	
Column	Number	948	1690	1928	1395	880	6841
total	Percentage	13.9	24.7	28.2	20.4	12.9	100.0

$x^2 = 13.3$
d.f. = 8
n.s.

TABLE 45
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF DROPOUTS BY INFLUENCE OF RECENT CHANGE/TIMING OF DECISION AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

Influence of recent change/timing of decision		A	B	C	D	F	Total
Yes		6	31	90	96	75	298
		8.6	6.6	5.7	5.5	5.6	5.7
No, sudden		21	133	449	445	308	1356
		30.0	28.4	28.5	25.7	23.0	26.1
No, overtime		43	305	1038	1192	957	3535
		61.4	65.0	65.8	68.8	71.4	68.1
Column total	Number	70	469	1577	1733	1340	5189
	Percentage	1.3	9.0	30.4	33.4	25.8	100.0

$x^2 = 16.1$
d.f. = 8
sig. at $\leqslant$ .05 level.

TABLE 46
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF DROPOUTS' SECOND PLANS BY ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

Second plans		A	B	C	D	F	Total
Stay at job	No.	0	3	7	3	3	16
	Row %	0.0	18.8	43.8	18.8	18.8	1.3
	Col. %	0.0	2.7	1.9	0.7	1.0	
Better job		0	0	9	10	7	26
		0.0	0.0	34.6	38.5	26.9	2.1
		0.0	0.0	2.4	2.4	2.3	
Return to same secondary school		0	1	5	14	10	30
		0.0	3.3	16.7	46.7	33.3	2.4
		0.0	0.9	1.3	3.3	3.2	
Return to different secondary school		0	3	5	8	7	23
		0.0	13.0	21.7	34.8	30.4	1.9
		0.0	2.7	1.3	1.9	2.3	
Trade school		0	5	38	39	33	115
		0.0	4.3	33.0	33.9	28.7	9.4
		0.0	4.4	10.2	9.3	10.6	
Community college		3	12	47	47	23	132
		2.3	9.1	35.6	35.6	17.4	10.8
		23.1	10.6	12.7	11.2	7.4	
University		0	4	5	3	4	16
		0.0	25.0	31.3	18.8	25.0	1.3
		0.0	3.5	1.3	0.7	1.3	
Night school		4	35	115	109	78	341
		1.2	10.3	33.7	32.0	22.9	27.8
		30.8	31.0	31.0	26.0	25.1	
Care for home		1	6	19	21	15	62
		1.6	9.7	30.6	33.9	24.2	5.1
		7.7	5.3	5.1	5.0	4.8	
No plans		5	33	107	137	117	399
		1.3	8.3	26.8	34.3	29.3	32.5
		38.5	29.2	28.8	32.7	37.6	
Other		0	11	14	28	14	67
		0.0	16.4	20.9	41.8	20.9	5.5
		0.0	9.7	3.8	6.7	4.5	
Column total	Number	13	113	371	419	311	1227
	Percentage	1.1	9.2	30.2	34.1	25.3	100.0

TABLE 47
1973-74 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY*
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF DROPOUTS' SECOND PLANS BY ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

Second plans		B	C	D	F	Total
Stay at job	No.	3	8	15	14	40
	Row %	7.5	20.0	37.5	35.0	11.3
	Col. %	13.0	8.2	11.4	13.9	
Better job		3	15	20	19	57
		5.3	26.3	35.1	33.3	16.1
		13.0	15.5	15.2	18.8	
Return to same secondary school		2	8	13	10	33
		6.1	24.2	39.4	30.3	9.3
		8.7	8.2	9.8	9.9	
Return to different secondary school		1	2	4	7	14
		7.1	14.3	28.6	50.0	4.0
		4.3	2.1	3.0	6.9	
Trade school		1	5	10	10	26
		3.8	19.2	38.5	38.5	7.4
		4.3	5.2	7.6	9.9	
Community college		1	10	6	5	22
		4.5	45.5	27.3	22.7	6.2
		4.3	10.3	4.5	5.0	
University		1	3	1	2	7
		14.3	42.9	14.3	28.6	2.0
		4.3	3.1	0.8	2.0	
Night school		7	31	50	30	118
		5.9	26.3	42.4	25.4	33.4
		30.4	32.0	37.9	29.7	
Other		4	15	13	4	36
		11.1	41.7	36.1	11.1	10.2
		17.4	15.5	9.8	4.0	
Column total	Number	23	97	132	101	353
	Percentage	6.5	27.5	37.4	28.6	100.0

*Including Grades 9 & 10 of two boards of the sample.

TABLE 48
1974-75 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF DROPOUTS' OPEN-ENDED PLANS BY YEAR

Open-ended plans		Year 1	2	3	4	5	Total
Hope to find a job	No.	129	234	184	138	55	740
	Row %	17.4	31.6	24.9	18.6	7.4	79.8
	Col. %	86.0	84.5	79.0	78.9	59.8	
Expect to move		3	3	9	3	1	19
		15.8	15.8	47.4	15.8	5.3	2.0
		2.0	1.1	3.9	1.7	1.1	
Get married		3	9	5	8	4	29
		10.3	31.0	17.2	27.6	13.8	3.1
		2.0	3.2	2.1	4.6	4.3	
Travel		5	6	15	12	14	52
		9.6	11.5	28.8	23.1	26.9	5.6
		3.3	2.2	6.4	6.9	15.2	
Enter armed forces		7	18	11	6	8	50
		14.0	36.0	22.0	12.0	16.0	5.4
		4.7	6.5	4.7	3.4	8.7	
Attend other education		2	6	5	6	7	26
		7.7	23.1	19.2	23.1	26.9	2.8
		1.3	2.2	2.1	3.4	7.6	
Start in-service training/apprenticeship		1	0	1	2	1	5
		20.0	0.0	20.0	40.0	20.0	0.5
		0.7	0.0	0.4	1.1	1.1	
Other		0	1	3	0	2	6
		0.0	16.7	50.0	0.0	33.3	0.6
		0.0	0.4	1.3	0.0	2.2	
Column total	Number	150	277	233	175	92	927
	Percentage	16.2	29.9	25.1	18.9	9.9	100.0

TABLE 49
1973-74 ONTARIO DROPOUT SURVEY*
NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF DROPOUTS' OPEN-ENDED PLANS BY YEAR

Open-ended plans		Year 1	2	3	4	5	Total
	No.	2	10	13	7	8	40
No plans	Row %	5.0	25.0	32.5	17.5	20.0	14.7
	Col. %	12.5	30.3	11.9	10.0	18.2	
		0	0	2	0	0	2
Expect to move		0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.7
		0.0	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0	
		0	0	6	5	3	14
Enter armed forces		0.0	0.0	42.9	35.7	21.4	5.1
		0.0	0.0	5.5	7.1	6.8	
		0	0	8	5	5	18
Attend other		0.0	0.0	44.4	27.8	27.8	6.6
education		0.0	0.0	7.3	7.1	11.4	
		0	1	9	5	7	22
Travel		0.0	4.5	40.9	22.7	31.8	8.1
		0.0	3.0	8.3	7.1	15.9	
		0	2	5	6	6	19
Get married		0.0	10.5	26.3	31.6	31.6	7.0
		0.0	6.1	4.6	8.6	13.6	
		5	5	25	19	3	57
Hope to find a job		8.8	8.8	43.9	33.3	5.3	21.0
		31.3	15.2	22.9	27.1	6.8	
		2	0	3	2	3	10
Other		20.0	0.0	30.0	20.0	30.0	3.7
		12.5	0.0	2.8	2.9	6.8	
		7	15	38	21	9	90
Undecided		7.8	16.7	42.2	23.3	10.0	33.1
		43.8	45.5	34.9	30.0	20.5	
Column	Number	16	33	109	70	44	272
total	Percentage	5.9	12.1	40.1	25.7	16.2	100.0

*Including grades 9 & 10

TABLE 50

1974-75 ONTARIO DROFOUT SURVEY

NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF DROPOUTS' OPEN-ENDED PLANS BY ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

Open-ended plans		A	B	C	D	F	Total
Hope to find a job	No.	10	42	151	196	170	569
	Row %	1.8	7.4	26.5	34.4	29.9	79.7
	Col. %	76.9	75.0	77.4	82.4	80.2	
Expect to move		0	2	3	6	4	15
		0.0	13.3	20.0	40.0	26.7	2.1
		0.0	3.6	1.5	2.5	1.9	
Get married		1	2	6	7	7	23
		4.3	8.7	26.1	30.4	30.4	3.2
		7.7	3.6	3.1	2.9	3.3	
Travel		0	4	14	9	9	36
		0.0	11.1	38.9	25.0	25.0	5.0
		0.0	7.1	7.2	3.8	4.2	
Enter armed forces		1	1	14	12	13	41
		2.4	2.4	34.1	29.3	31.7	5.7
		7.7	1.8	7.2	5.0	6.1	
Attend other education		1	3	4	6	7	21
		4.8	14.3	19.0	28.6	33.3	2.9
		7.7	5.4	2.1	2.5	3.3	
Start in-service training apprenticeship		0	1	0	1	2	4
		0.0	25.0	0.0	25.0	50.0	0.6
		0.0	1.8	0.0	0.4	0.9	
Other		0	1	3	1	0	5
		0.0	20.0	60.0	20.0	0.0	0.7
		0.0	1.8	1.5	0.4	0.0	
Column total	Number	13	56	195	238	212	714
	Percentage	1.8	7.8	27.3	33.3	29.7	100.0

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QUESTIONNAIRE SAMPLE

For the past four years in the secondary schools of Ontario there has been an increase in the number of students who registered in September and left during the year, before completing their programs. Although you may have felt that no one cared about your decision to leave school, we want to assure you that educators are concerned.

This short questionnaire is intended to help find out why students are leaving school, what they are doing now, and what their plans are. Would you take a few minutes to answer these questions?

Please tear off this portion and mail back the questionnaire. The postage is paid. The identification number on the questionnaire is not meant to identify you personally. Some 25,000 Ontario secondary school leavers will be participating in this survey and the numbering system is designed to locate you geographically within the province. Even though there are a large number of school leavers, your individual cooperation and reply is very important.

Thank you.

SURVEY OF SCHOOL LEAVERS

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

1. Why did you leave school? (Place number (s) corresponding to reason (s) in box (es), ranking in order of importance.)

01 To accept a job offer — 1st ☐☐
02 Personally needed money, had chance of job
03 To get married
04 Medical – illness/accident/drugs/to have baby — 2nd ☐☐
05 Had to leave for other personal reasons
06 Failing anyway, might as well leave
07 Dissatisfied with teachers/teaching — 3rd ☐☐
08 Dissatisfied with courses/program
09 Just hated school, couldn't hack it any longer
10 To travel
11 No particular reason, just drifted out — 4th ☐☐
12 Other (please specify) ____________

2. Did some recent change in your school (staff, study programs, etc.) influence your decision to leave? (Circle Appropriate Number)

Yes (please specify) ____________ 1
No, but I did decide to leave suddenly 2
No, I've been thinking about leaving for some time 3

3. Did your parent(s)/guardian approve of your leaving school? (Circle appropriate number(s).)

	Mother	Father	Guardian
Yes	1	1	1
No	2	2	2
Didn't care	3	3	3

4. What are you doing now? (Place number(s) corresponding to activity (ies) in box(es).)

10 Working full-time ____________ ☐☐
20 Working part-time Type of work or name of firm
30 Studying full-time ☐☐
40 Studying part-time ____________ Name of school
50 Got married
60 Had baby, am taking care of him/her
70 Unemployed, looking for work
80 Unemployed, just bumming around
90 Unemployed, travelling ☐☐
01 Other (please specify) ____________

5. What are your plans for next September? (Place number(s) corresponding to plan(s) in box(es).)

01 To stay at present job
02 Hope to have better/different job
03 To return to same secondary school
04 To return to different secondary school ☐☐
____________ Name of school
05 To go to trade school
06 To go to a community college (CAAT)
07 To go to university
08 To go to night school/study by correspondence
09 To care for home ☐☐
10 Have no specific plans
11 Other (please specify) ____________